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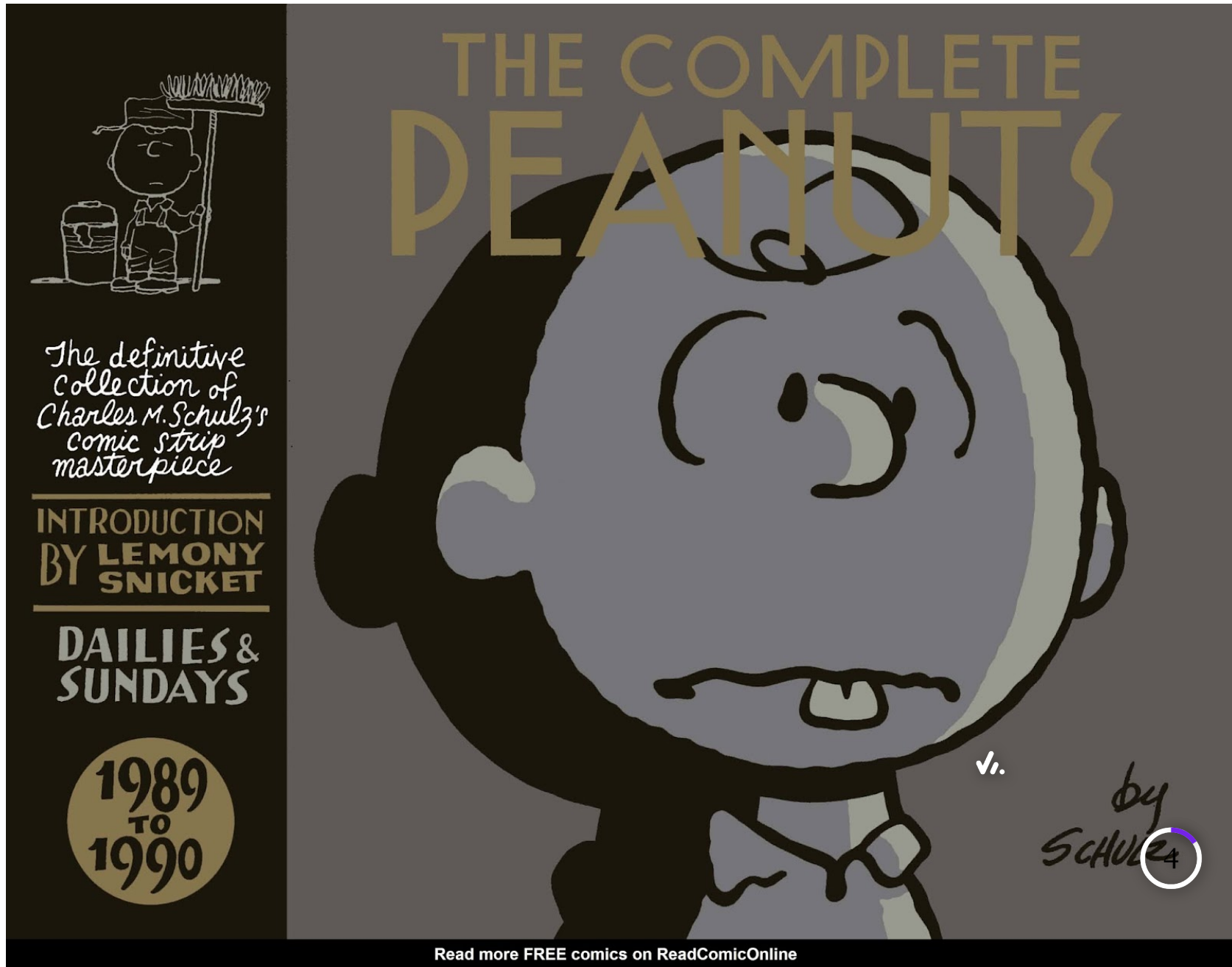
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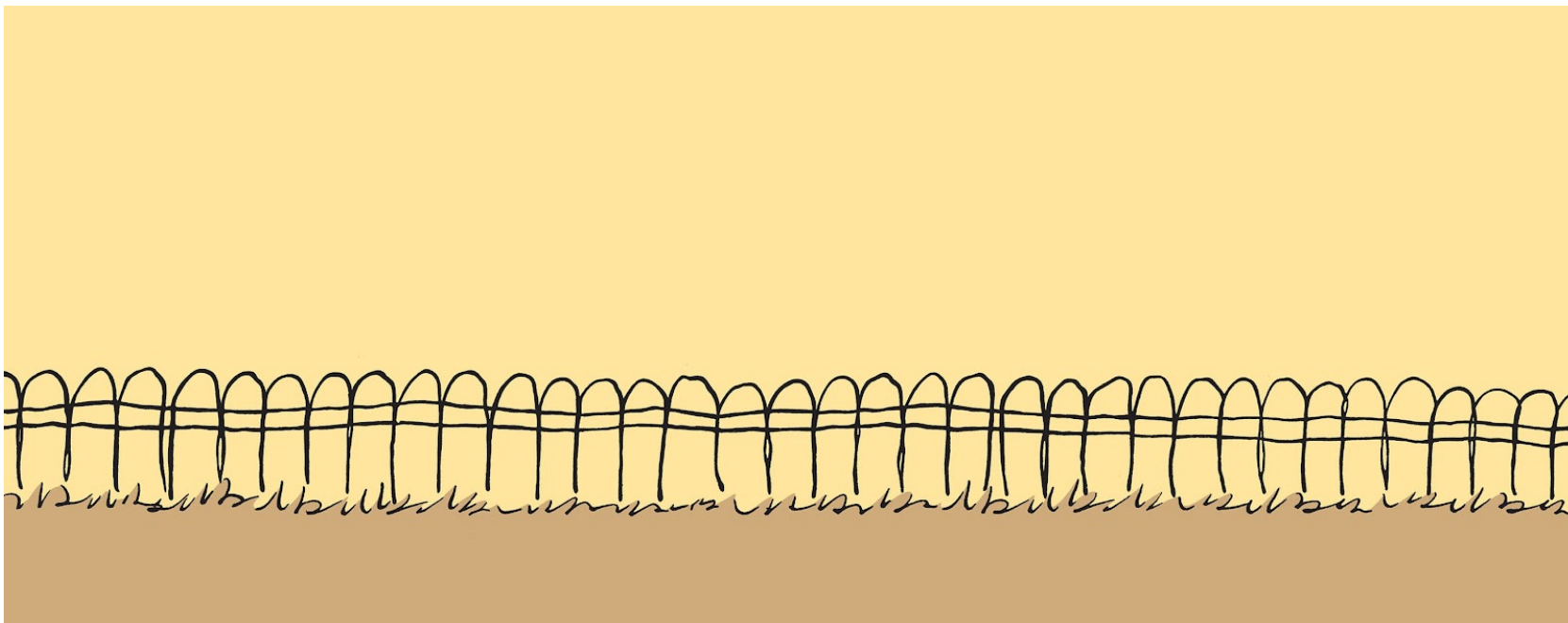














THE COMPLETE PEANUTS

by Charles M. Schulz

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CHARLES M. SCHULZ

THE COMPLETE
PEANUTS

1989 TO 1990



" THE FRIENDSHIP OF A BOY
AND HIS DOG IS A
BEAUTIFUL THING.."



■ FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS ■

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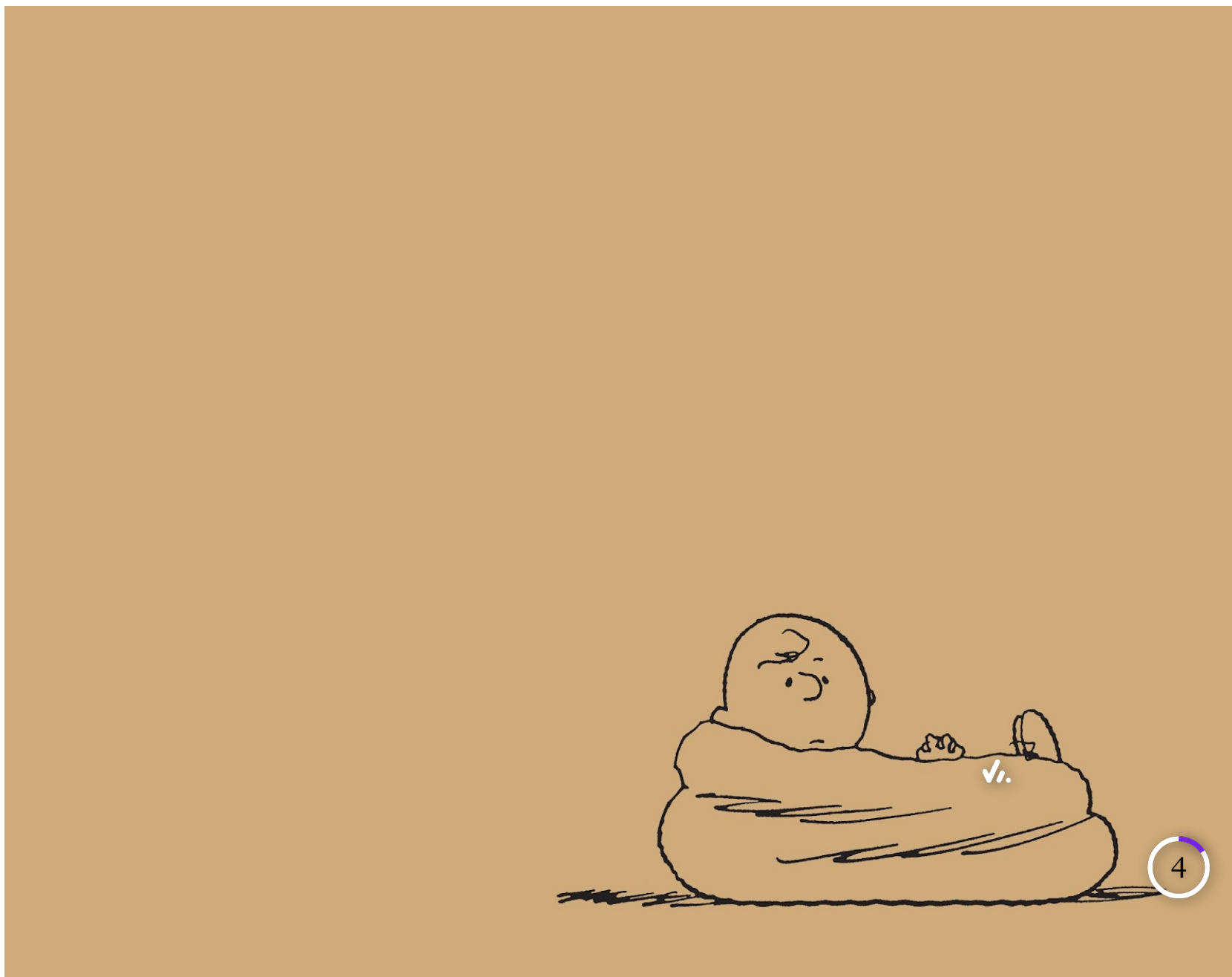


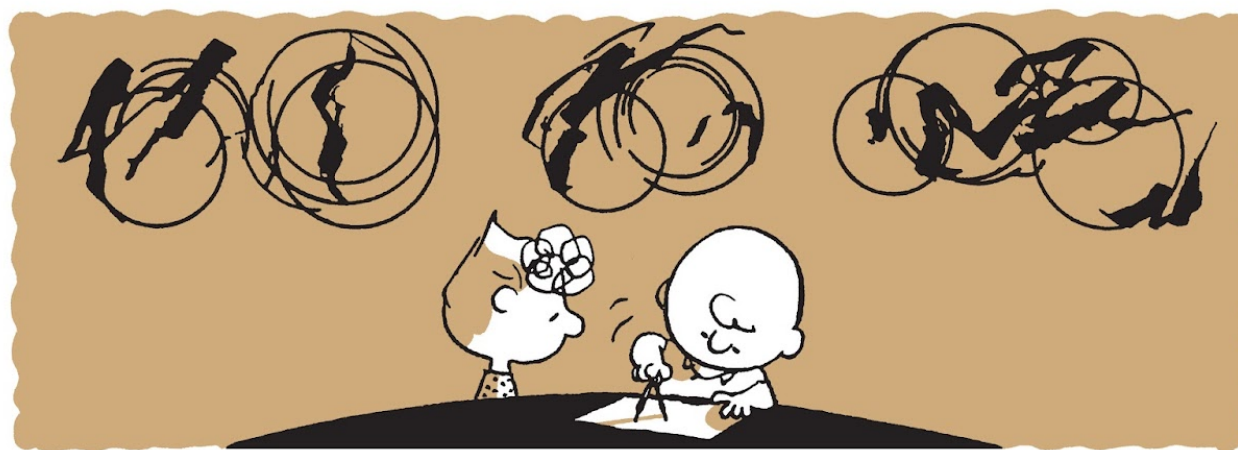


Charles M. Schulz in 1985 during the filming of *It's Your 20th Television Anniversary, Charlie Brown*. Courtesy of The Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center, Santa Rosa, California.

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FOREWORD by LEMONY SNICKET

Sometimes, a simple sentence in the morning paper is enough to send me back to bed. I've lost track of the number of days when I rise from slumber, pour my morning beverage and toast whatever I can find in the kitchen, and then sit in a chair and read something like this—

Everyone in the world is lonely. [198]

or this—

I've never seen anybody so completely useless. [312]

or this—

You wake up in the middle of the night, and

everything seems hopeless...you're all alone. You wonder what life is all about, and why you're here and does anyone really care, and you just stare into the dark, and you feel all alone... [178]

or maybe just—

Help me, I'm lost. [43]

—whereupon I weep or moan or burn my toast or experience some other morning catastrophe. Where do I see such statements, you ask? In what section of the newspaper can one find such bitter and sad proclamations? Foreign Affairs? Opinion? Business?



Oddly enough, these frantic sentences are found in the section marked “Comics,” from an inked serial melodrama that ran for half a century until the death of its author and illustrator, Charles M. Schulz, lowered the guillotine on the proceedings. The melodrama now runs again, over and over, in newspapers all over the world, like a spiral staircase forever taking you lower and lower. Over the years, this drama has been collected and released in volumes, presumably for readers who would rather have a great deal of pain at once rather than having it fed to them, spoonful by spoonful, over years of breakfasts. This book contains the sections of this melodrama which originally appeared in newspapers during the years 1989 and 1990, when things were miserable enough.

Now this misery is yours.

The hero of this melodrama is a balding grammar school student paralyzed by fear and self-loathing. “I’d like to buy a box of valentine candy for a girl who doesn’t know I exist,” he says, adding “I’ll never have the nerve to give it to her anyway.” [20] It’s no wonder he admits “I’ve always been sort of a useless person” [132] who “can’t even daydream good.” [25]

He’s a classic candidate for a mental health professional, but sadly the psychiatrist he chooses is also a child, who not only offers him nothing but cruelty and scorn during their sessions, but inappropriately socializes with him outside of the office and acts as a taunting athletic coach during their time outdoors. One would be tempted to label her as the villain in this ongoing tale of terror, if she didn’t share the same unhappy hopelessness as her helpless patient—



So I ask myself what could be more stupid than standing out here in right field in the rain? I keep asking myself the same question over...what could be more stupid? Then I ask myself again...In the meantime, I’m getting wet.
[207]

Even the most worthless psychiatrist knows that family life can dictate one’s mental turmoil, and the young “doctor”’s problems may well stem from her younger brother, who shuffles around town clutching raggedy bedclothes and trying to dissolve one of his own fingers in his mouth. It’s no wonder the psychiatrist has fallen into a cycle of romantic obsession and violent argument with a temperamental

musician modeling himself after a long-dead German composer famed for dying in agonizing pain. The younger brother, meanwhile, is the subject of romantic scrutiny by a flighty and dim-witted child — *yet another child!* — who is none other than the sister of our glum, bald hero, creating a lovelorn and familial entanglement unmatched since Hamlet's mother first winked at Uncle Claudius.

Our hero, in the meantime, is not free from obsessive complications: two women compete for his attention, all the while maintaining a tense “friendship” with one another despite the fact that one of them, out of stupidity or malice, mistakes the gender of the other. Call a young woman “sir” enough times and you can’t be surprised that she spends her time with a boy who constantly wallows in a cloud of his own filth.

Even the neighborhood dog, who by all rights should remain clueless of the goings-on, is ravaged by the local madness. When not talking to a bird who utters nothing but apostrophes, he fantasizes that he is fighting in one of the world’s most horrifying conflicts, one that claimed millions and millions in bloody casualties and pro-

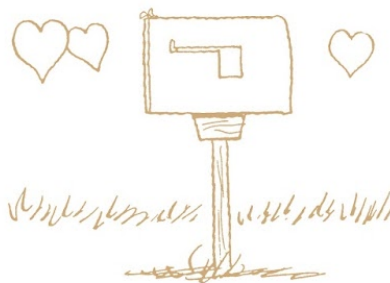
voked a sequel that still stands as a benchmark for the greatest catastrophe known to man. The dog prefers such a daydream to watching these children treat each other with indifferent barbarity.

Despite this tinderbox of tension and fear, this melodrama, unlike *Macbeth* or *Crime and Punishment* or *Little House on the Prairie*, does not descend into bloodshed. Mr. Schulz’s sense of doom is far quieter and more sinister. Instead, these children wander the neighborhood doing little else but contemplating their melancholy lives. There are a few fragments of plot — in the chapters included here, a teacher finds romantic misery at a baseball game, a dog wanders the desert hallucinating — but for the most part this melodrama is played out in conversation. Frustrated by their senseless suffering, the characters offer suspicious advice:

Never marry a musician and never answer the door. [233]

—implausible torture—

This is hard to believe, but my toes are caught in my binder. [115]



—resigned pessimism—

Someday...someone will ask you why we climbed this mountain, and you can answer simply, because it was there. Yes, I suppose you could also admit we had nothing else to do. [128]

—and increasing hysteria—

The world is coming to an end (in my opinion). Fill the water bottles! Stand in the doorways! Turn off the valves! Call Gramma! Board up the windows! Break out the rations! Get the spare blankets! Put on your boots! [304]

—and despite the fact that, in fifty years, none of these children get any older, they forlornly face the certain truth that the future will only bring more of the same:

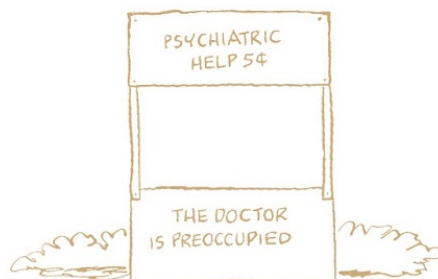
Getting upset is good for you. It prepares you for all the things that are going to happen to you later in life. [231]...Before you know it, you're old and you haven't really done anything... maybe it's better to just let the years go by. [118]

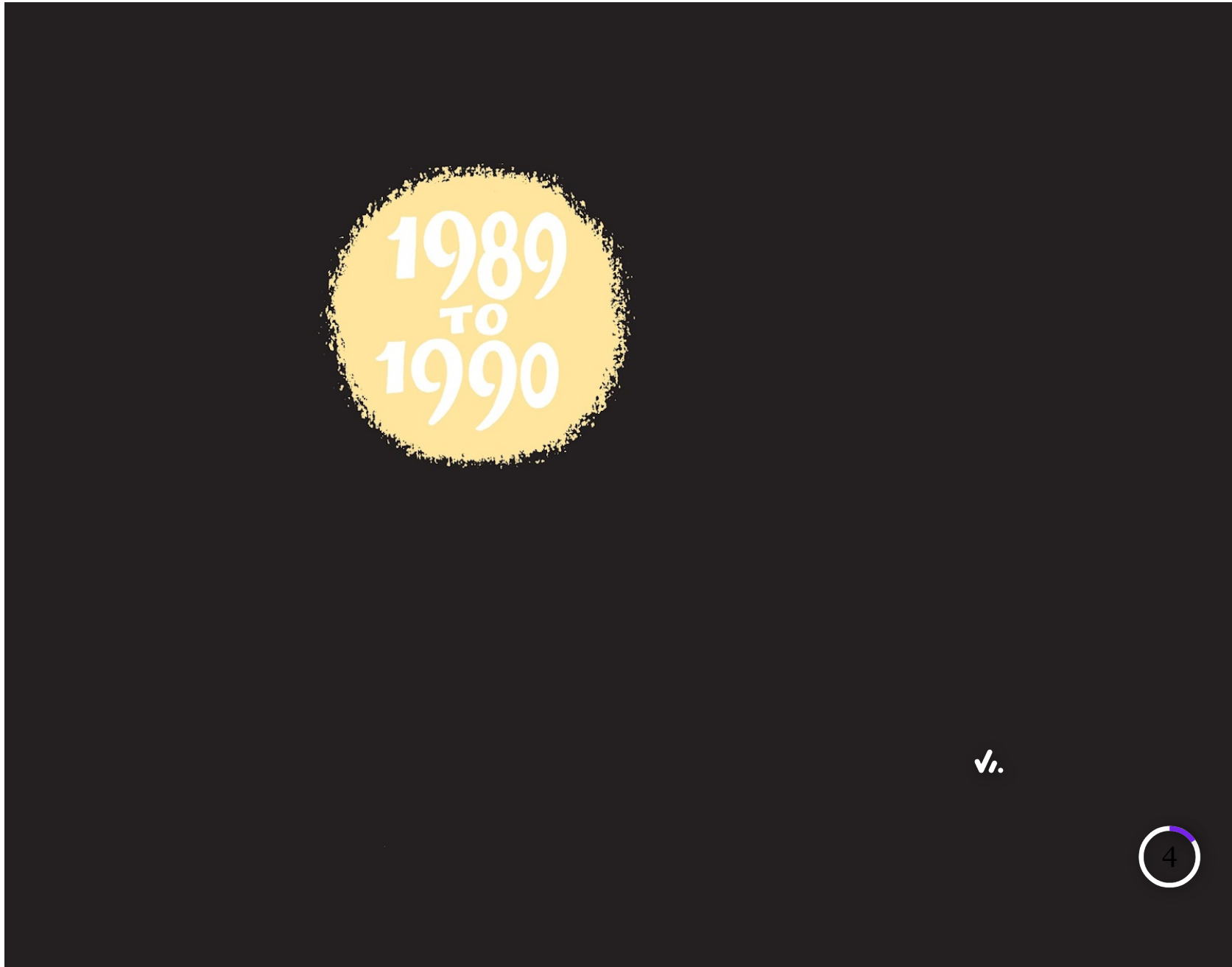
Why do I read this melodrama? Why do I immerse myself, morning after morning, volume

after volume, in these sad goings-on? Despite the fact that the characters in this saga derive little comfort from literature — “Why would anyone want to say ‘good night’ to the moon?” [213] asks the lovesick sister — I agree with our droopy hero when he says “I guess we all read what seems to interest us the most, don’t we?” [101]

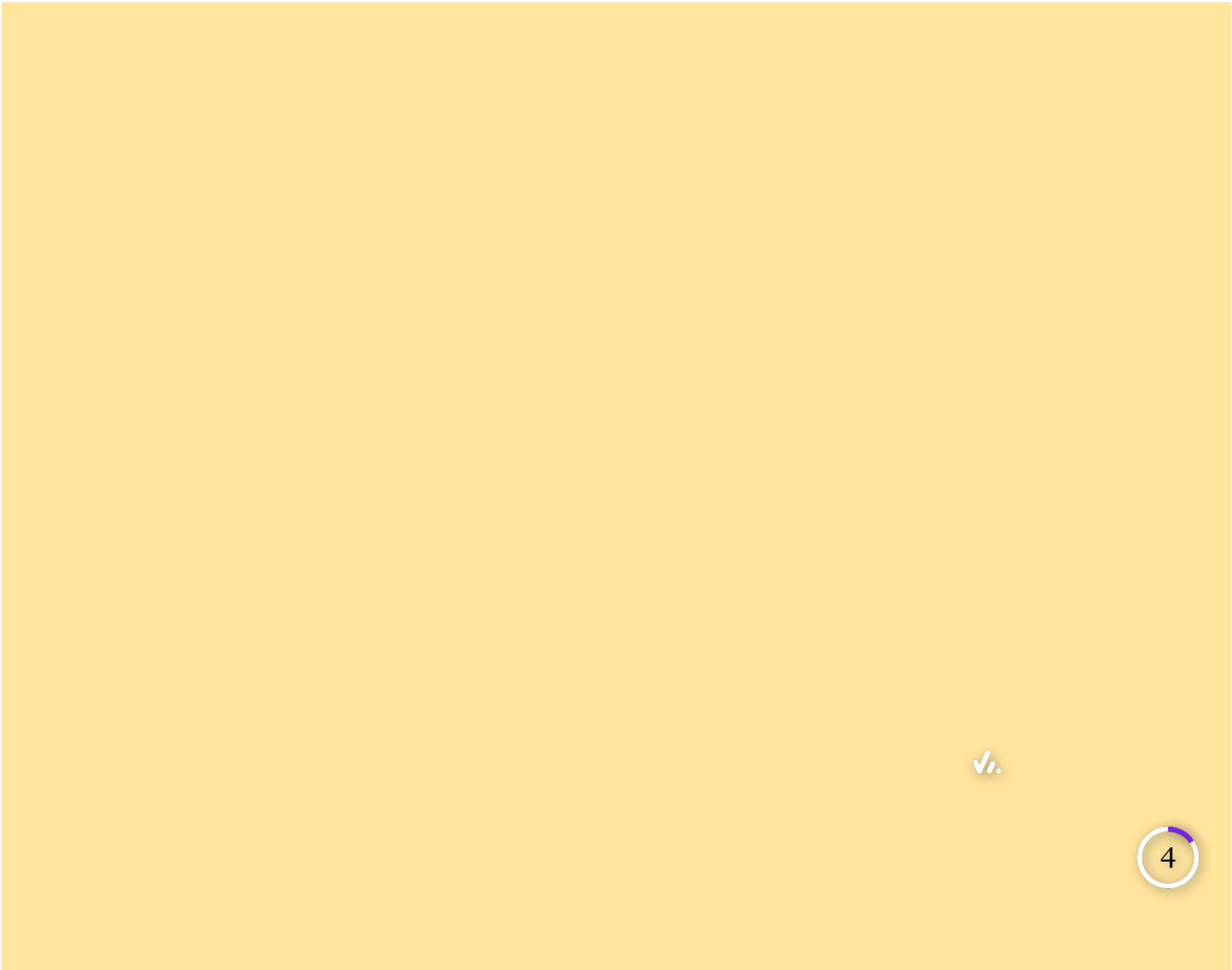
We do. I am fascinated by this endless, ghastly tale of these poor youngsters. I sink into their troubles like quicksand. I absorb episode after episode and hunger for more. In a way, this melodrama reminds me of some kind of foodstuff — individual portions of suffering, encased in a brittle shell of grainy philosophy that

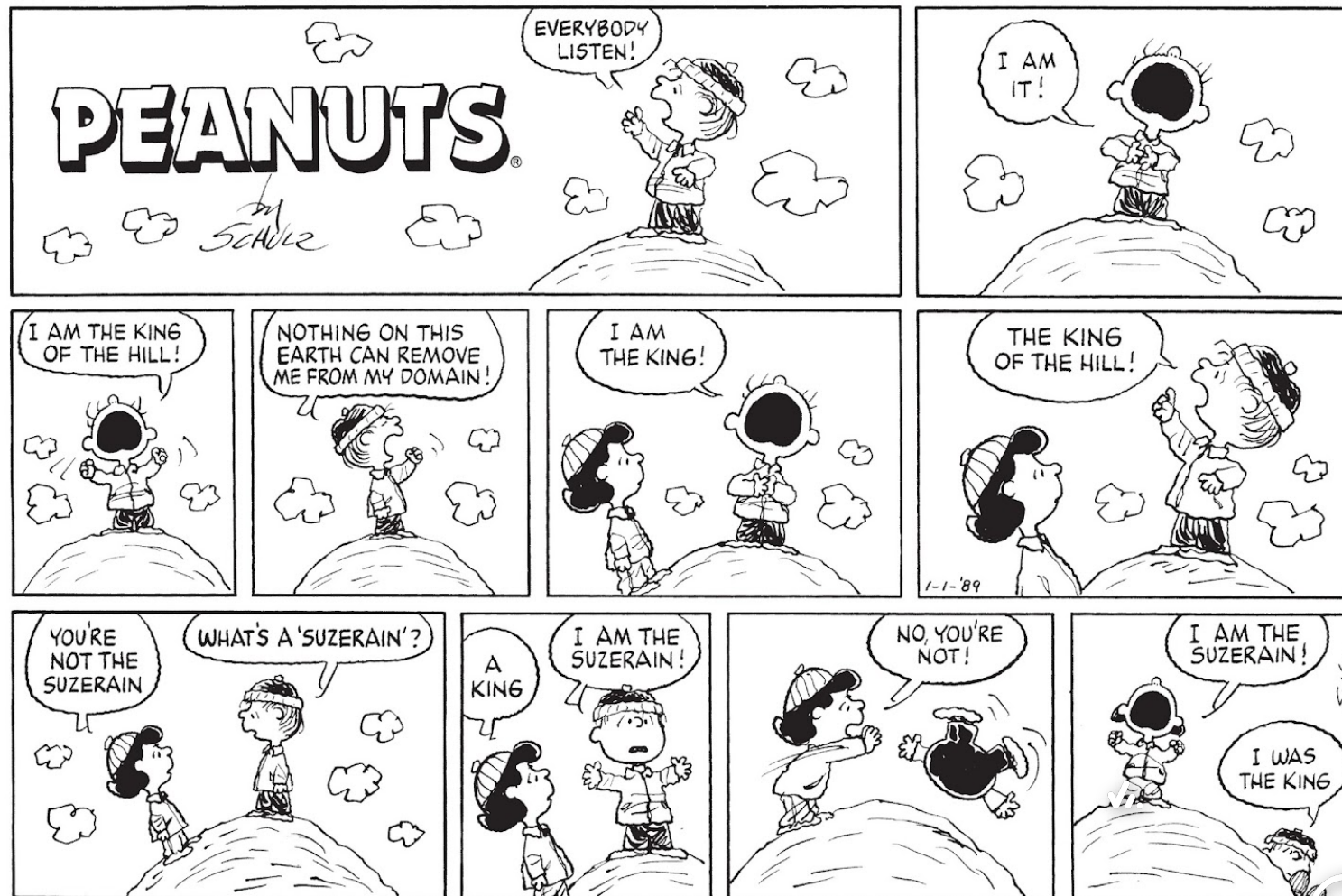
I pry open, again and again, to devour the material inside. It does not surprise me that some people are allergic to these things, but I find them addictive. They mash up in my mind, like something I’d spread on toast. I keep consuming them, over and over, a sad snack, some legume of despair, some grim bean salted with woe that I cannot bring myself to name.





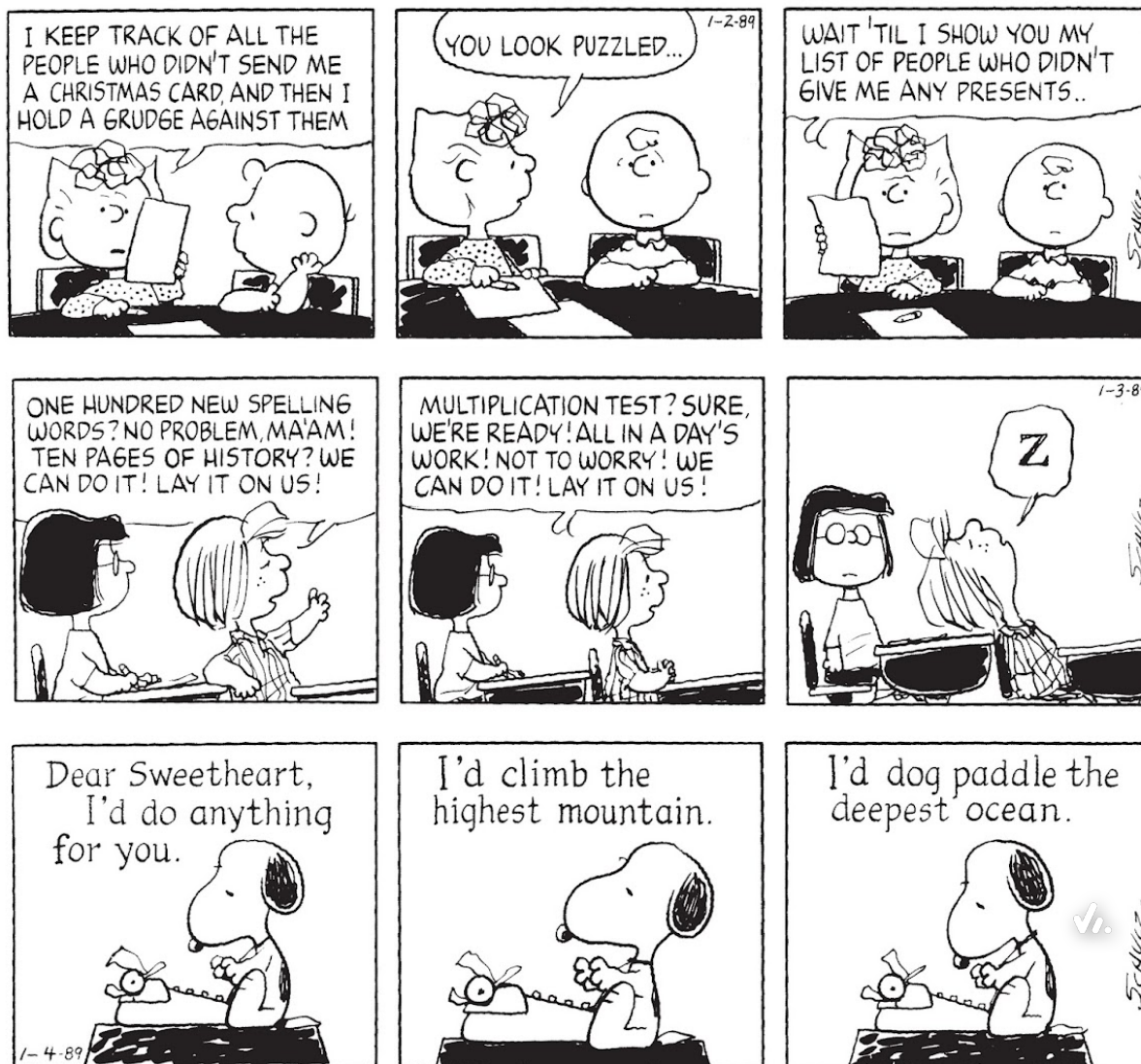


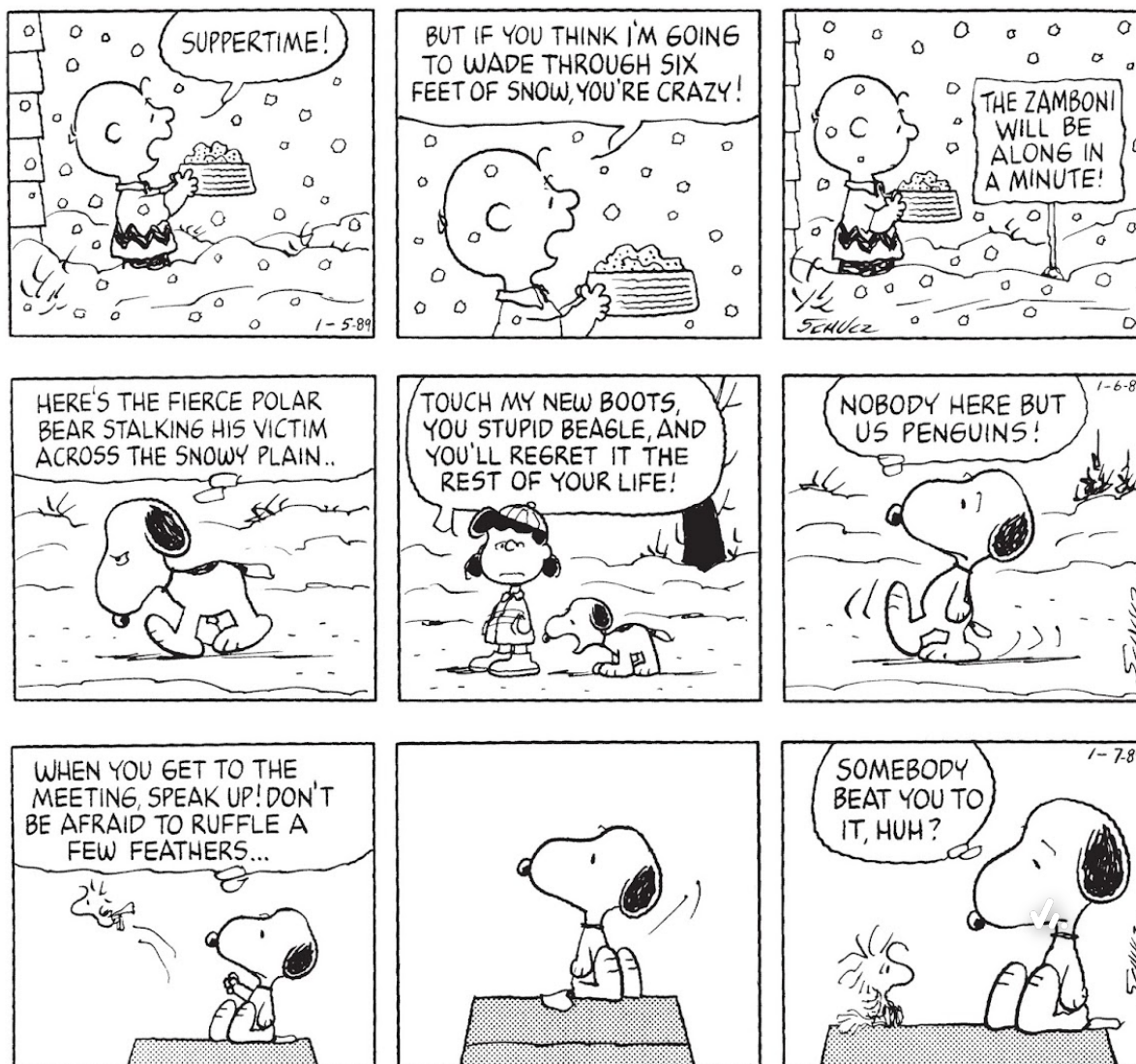




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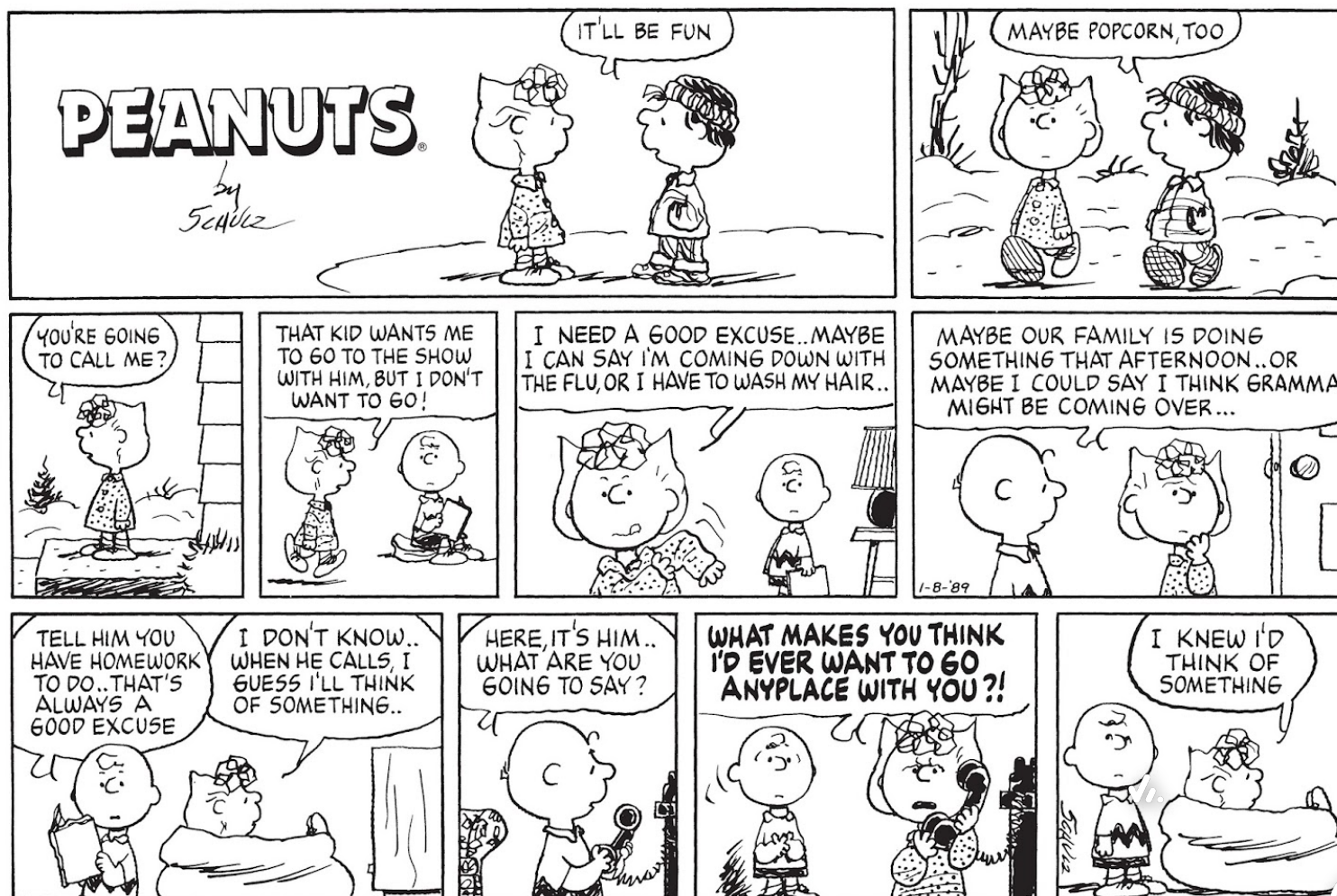




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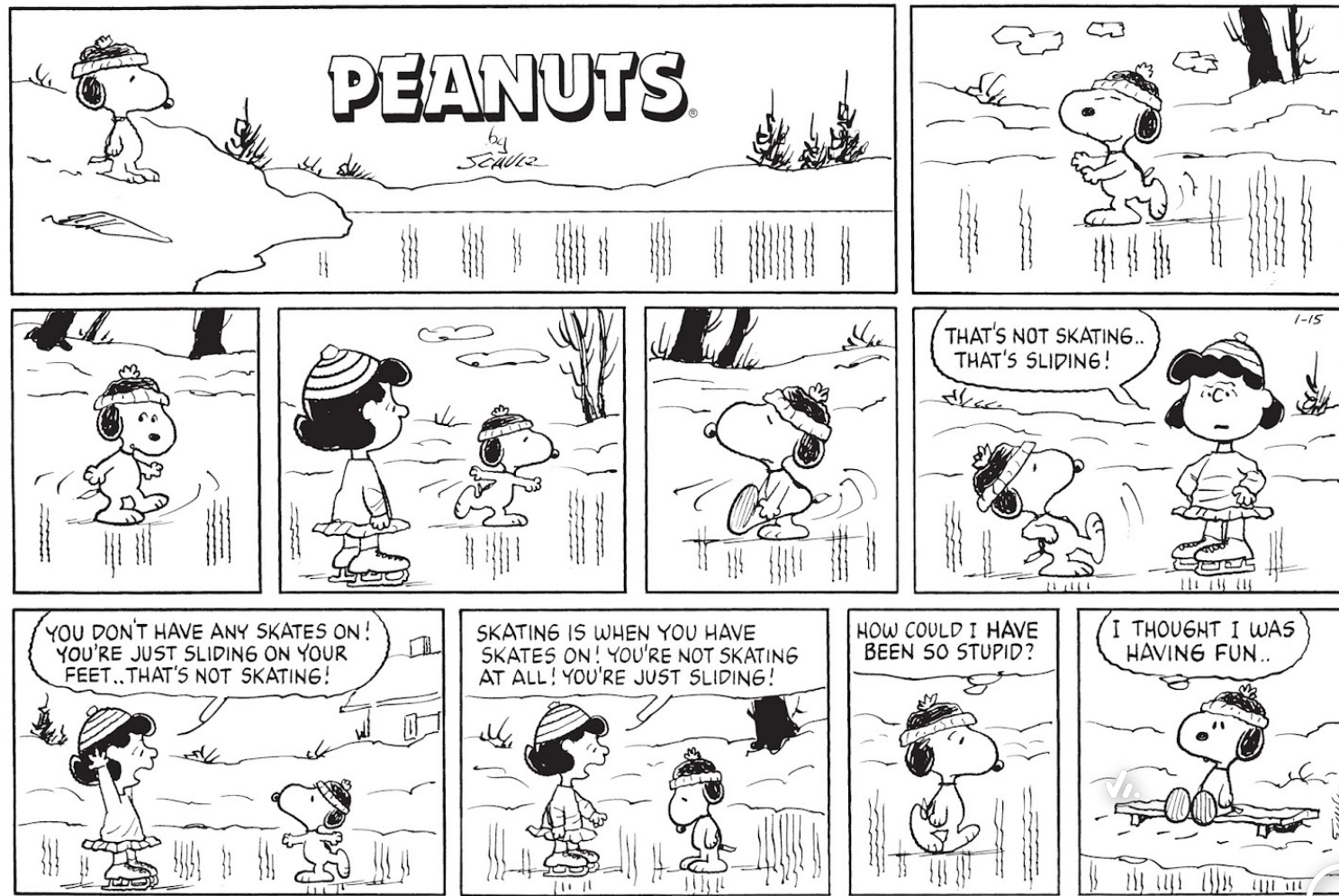


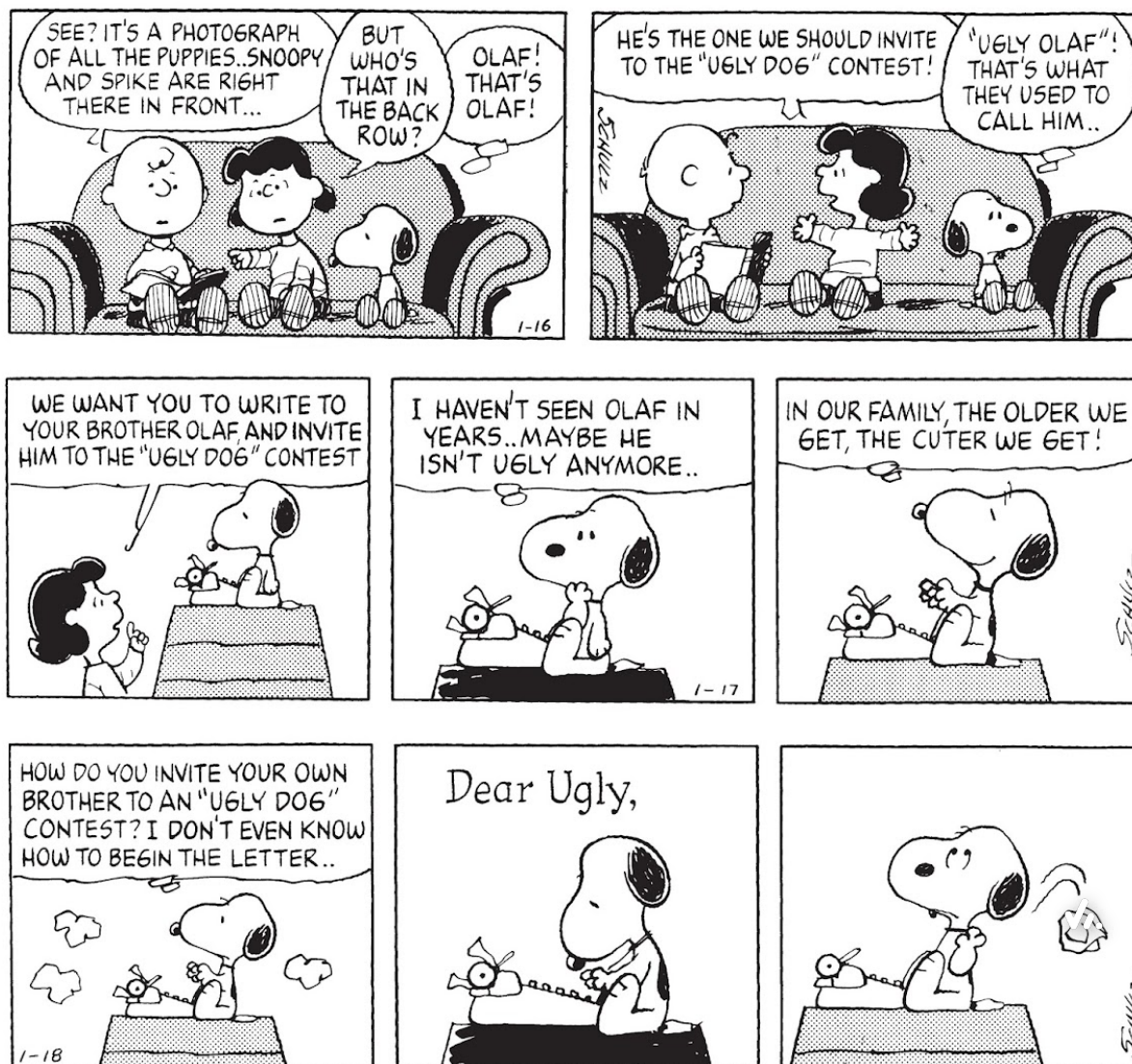
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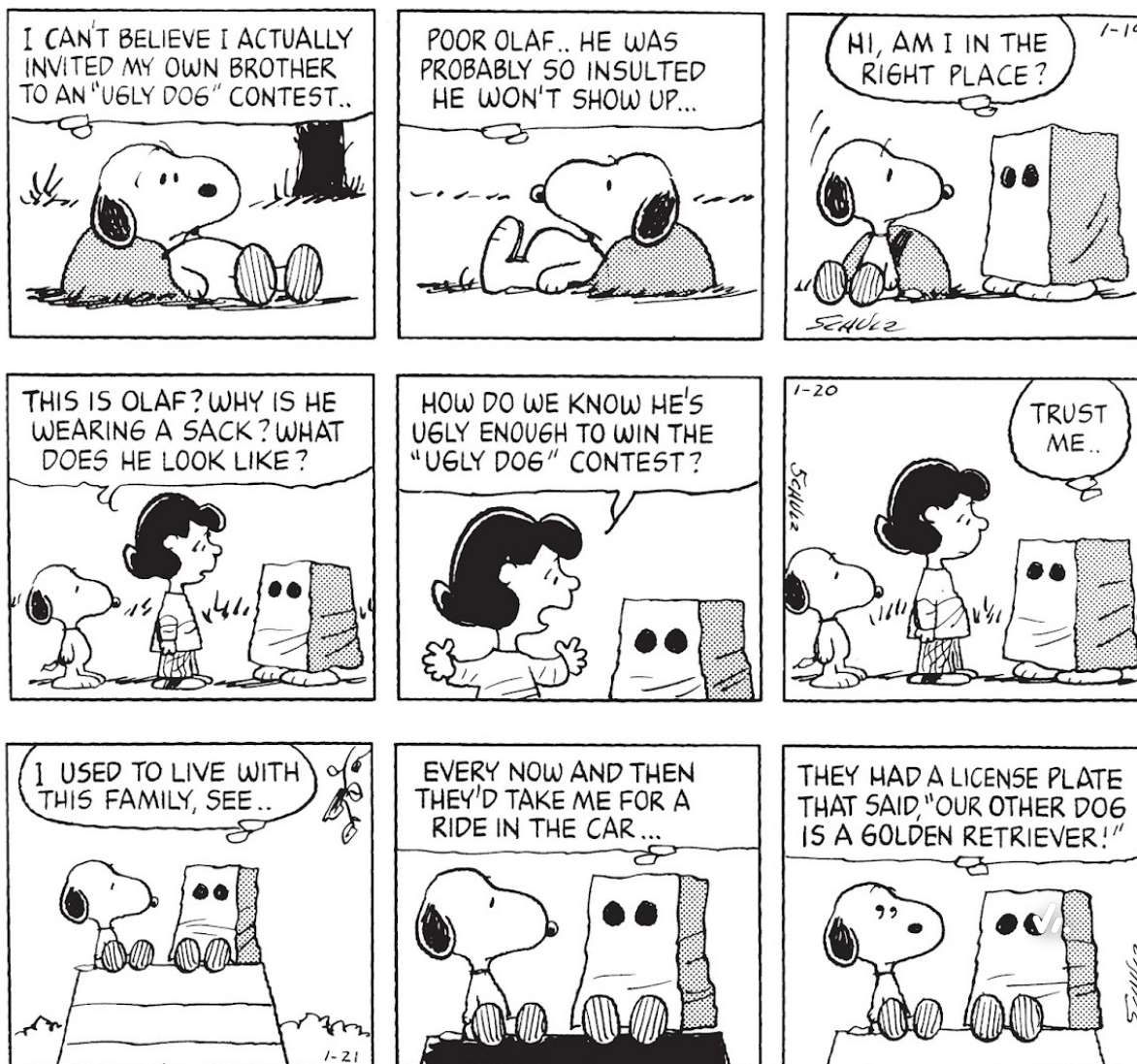
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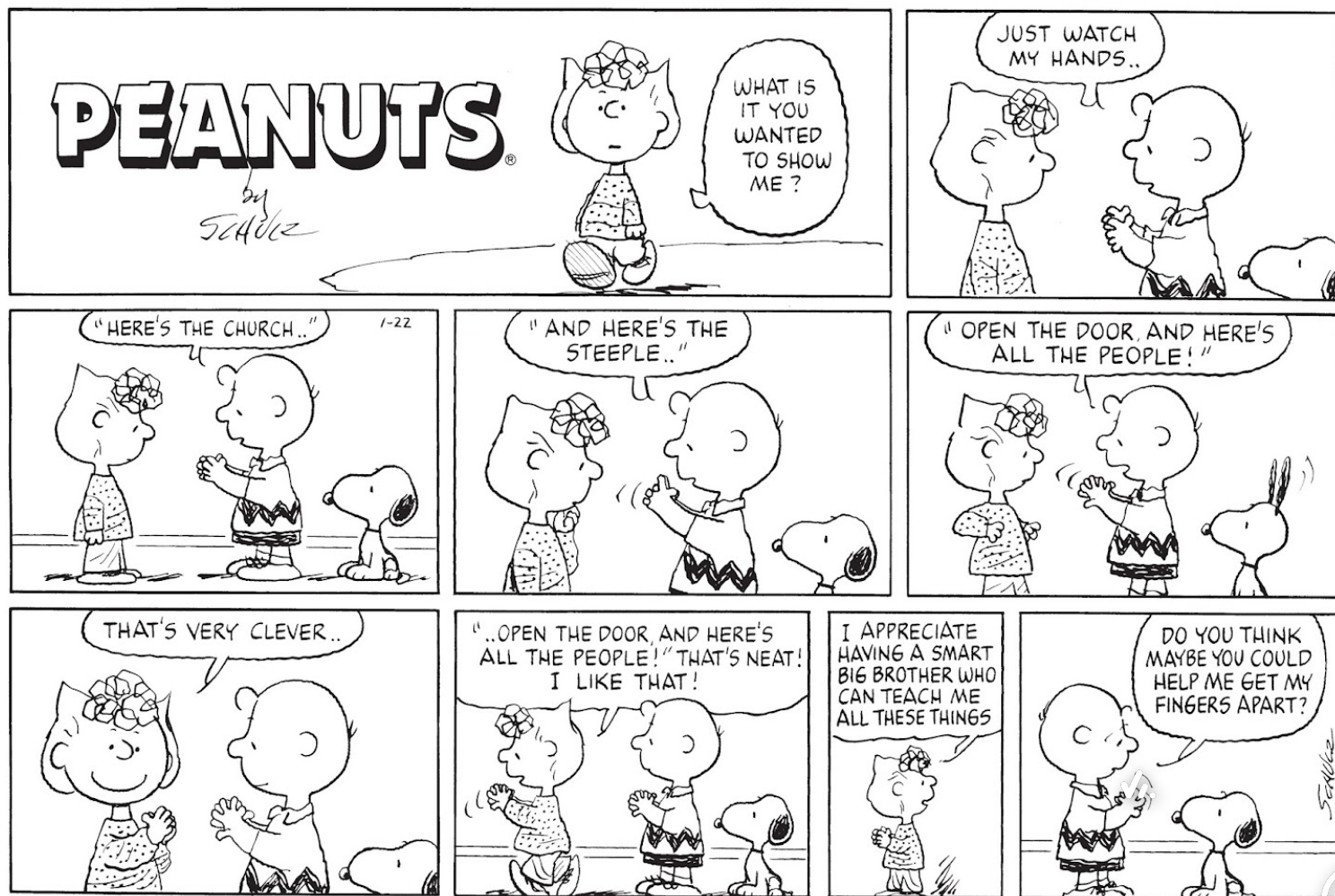




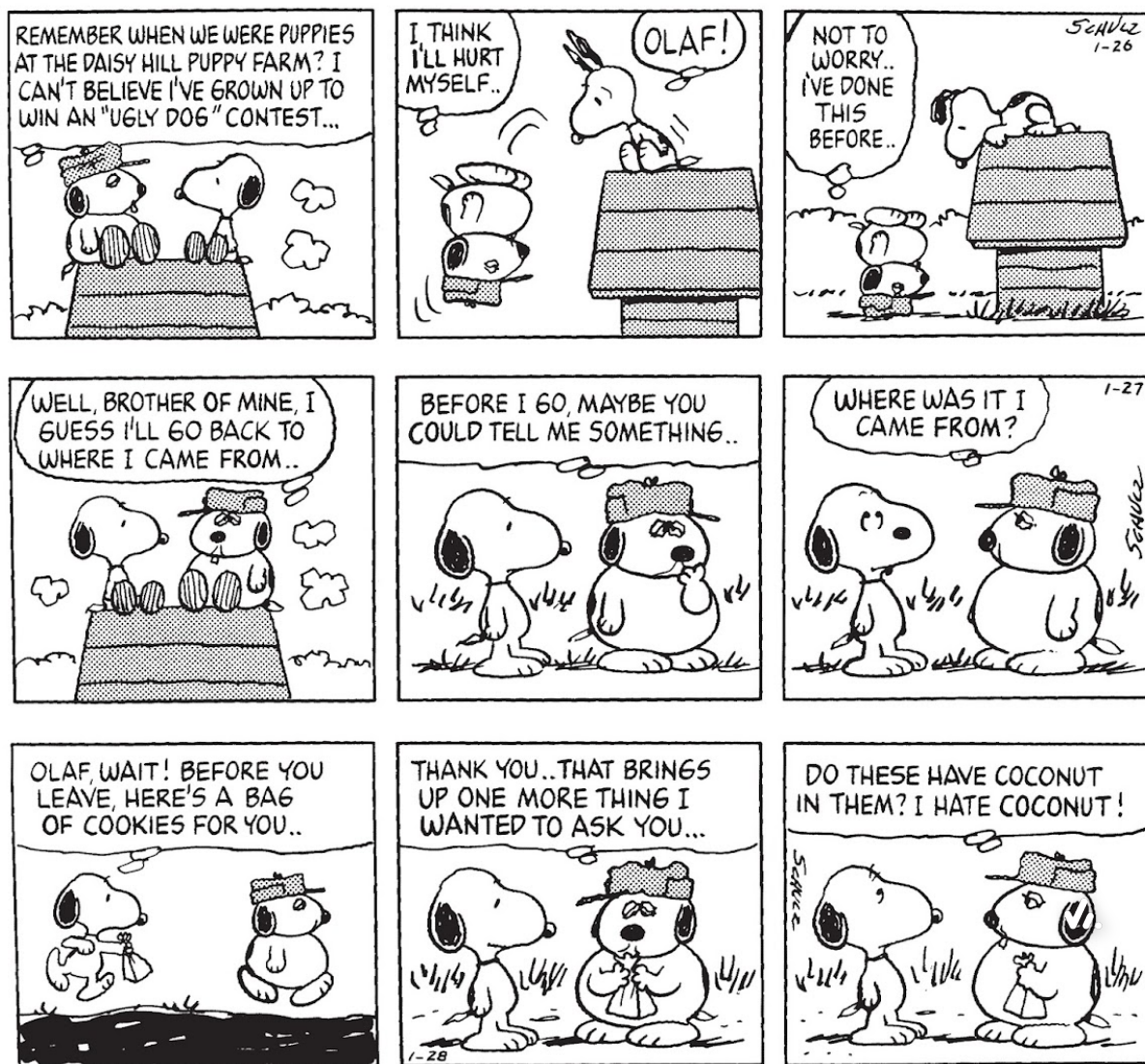
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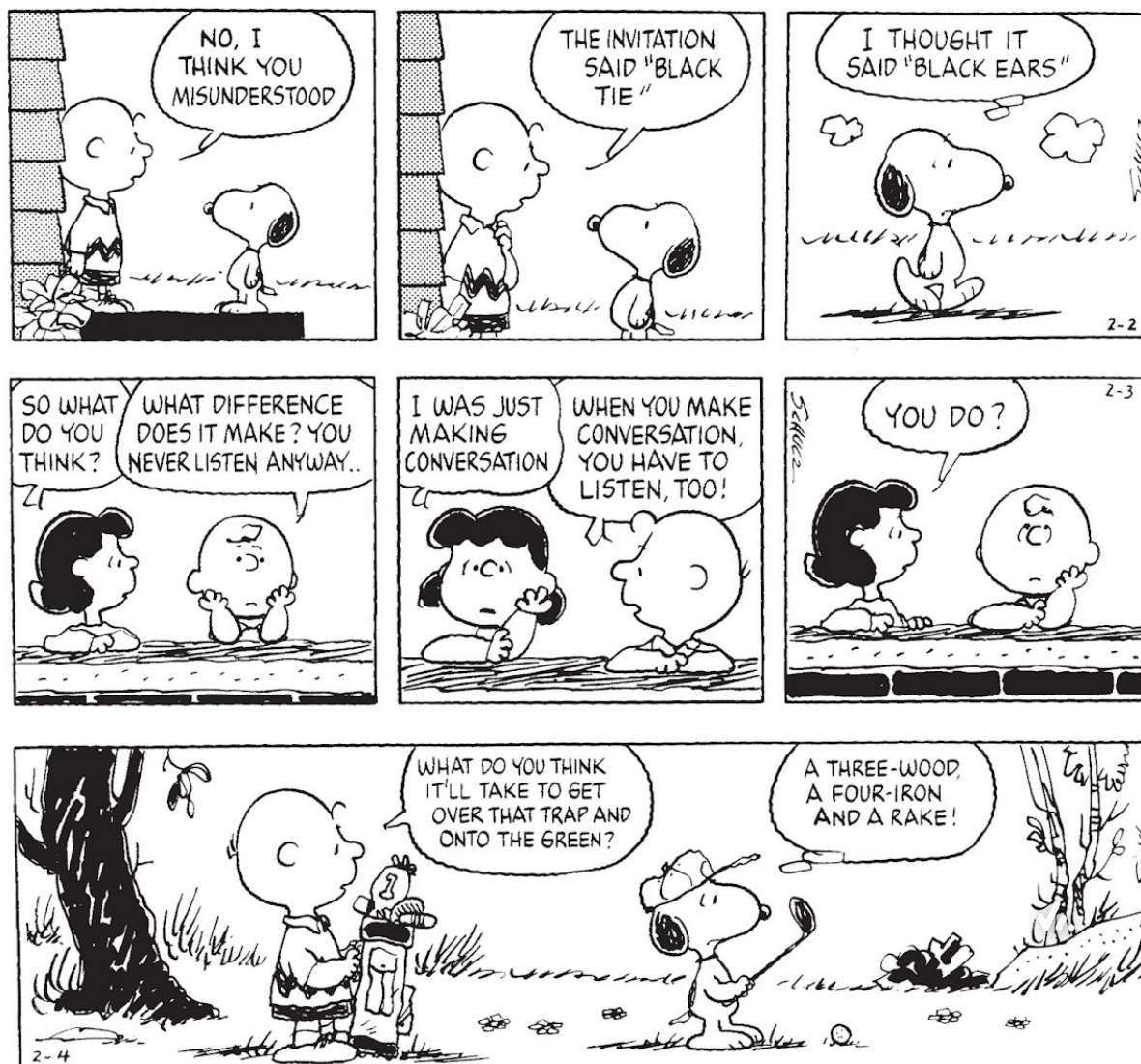






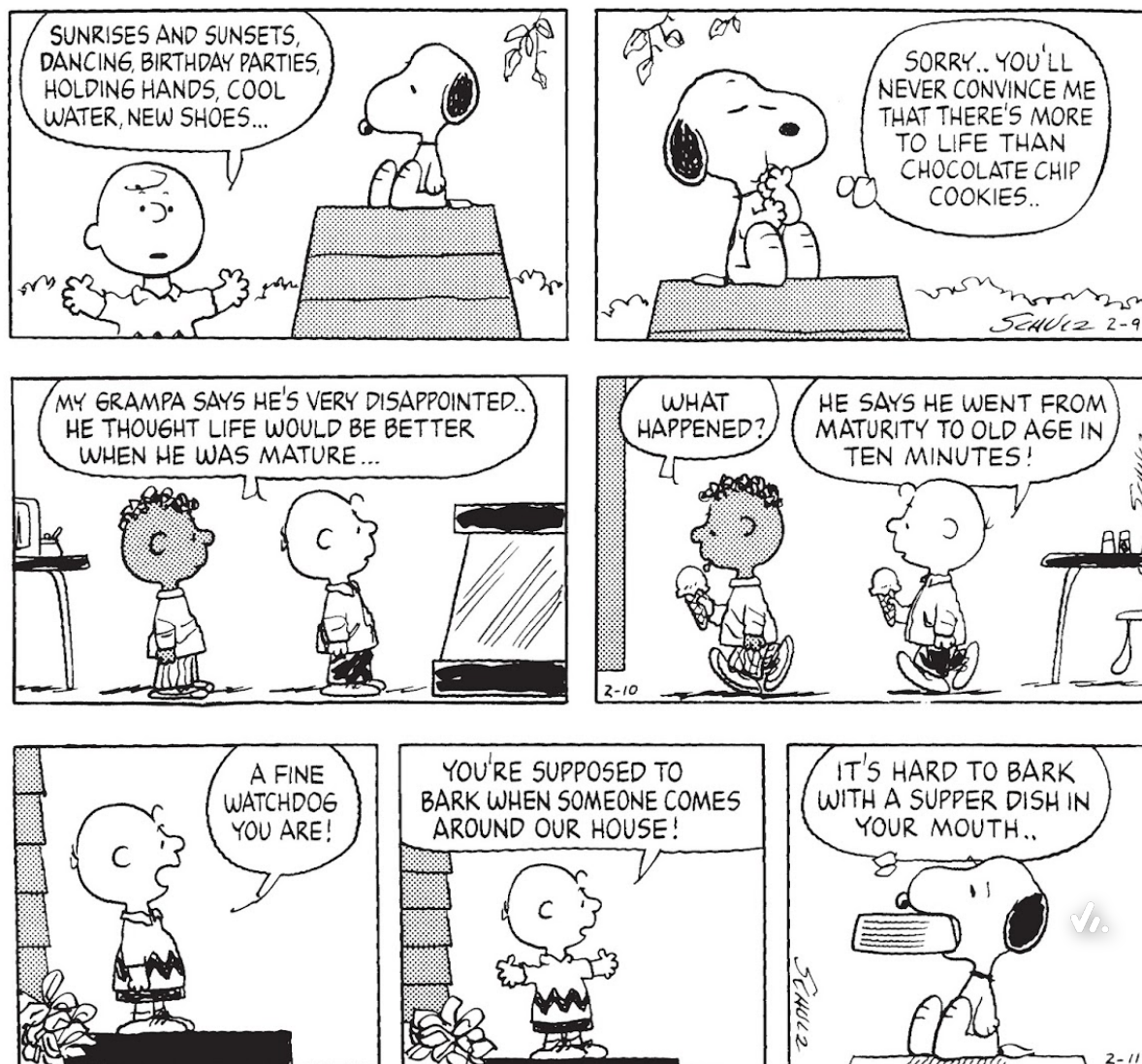






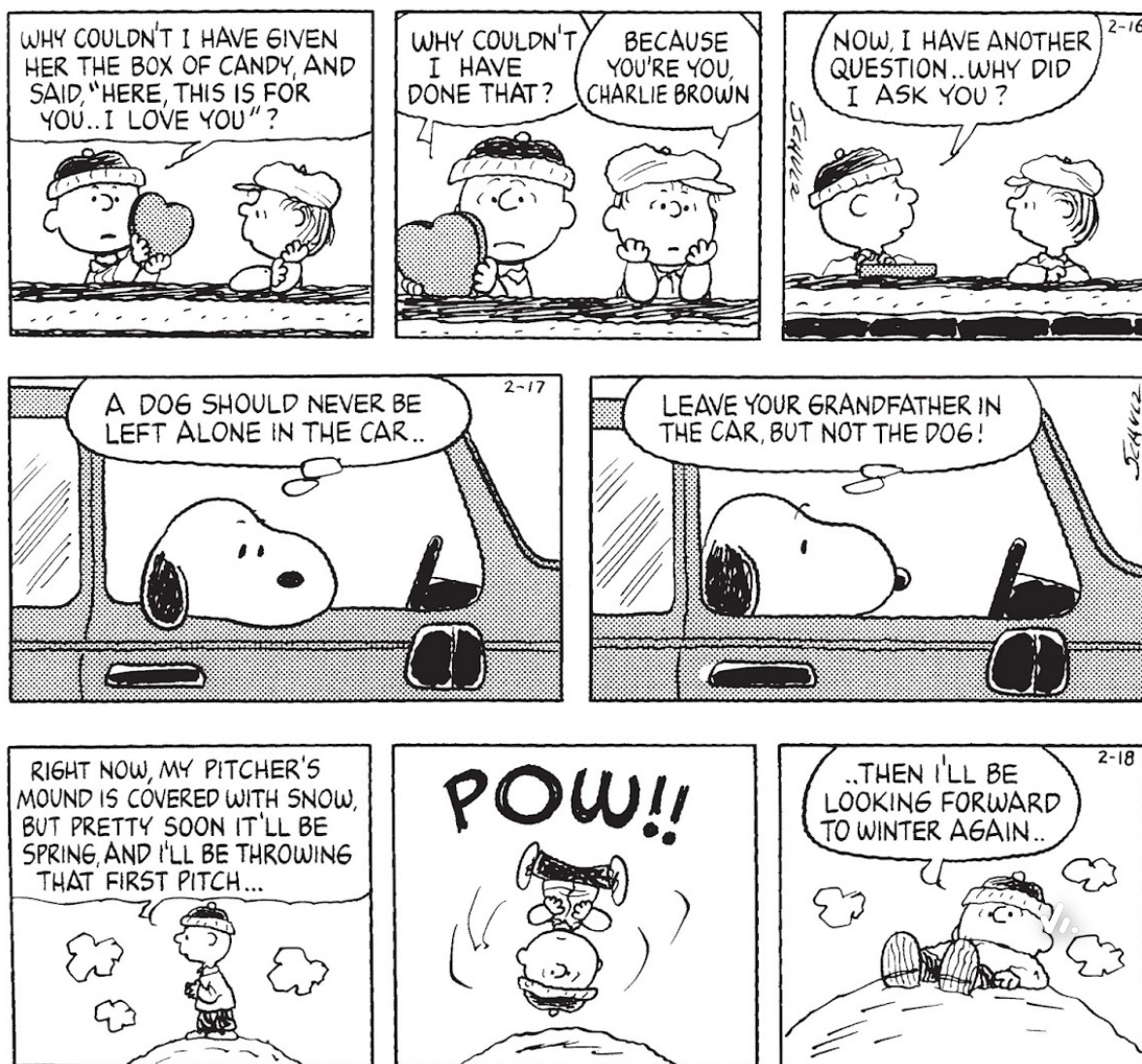




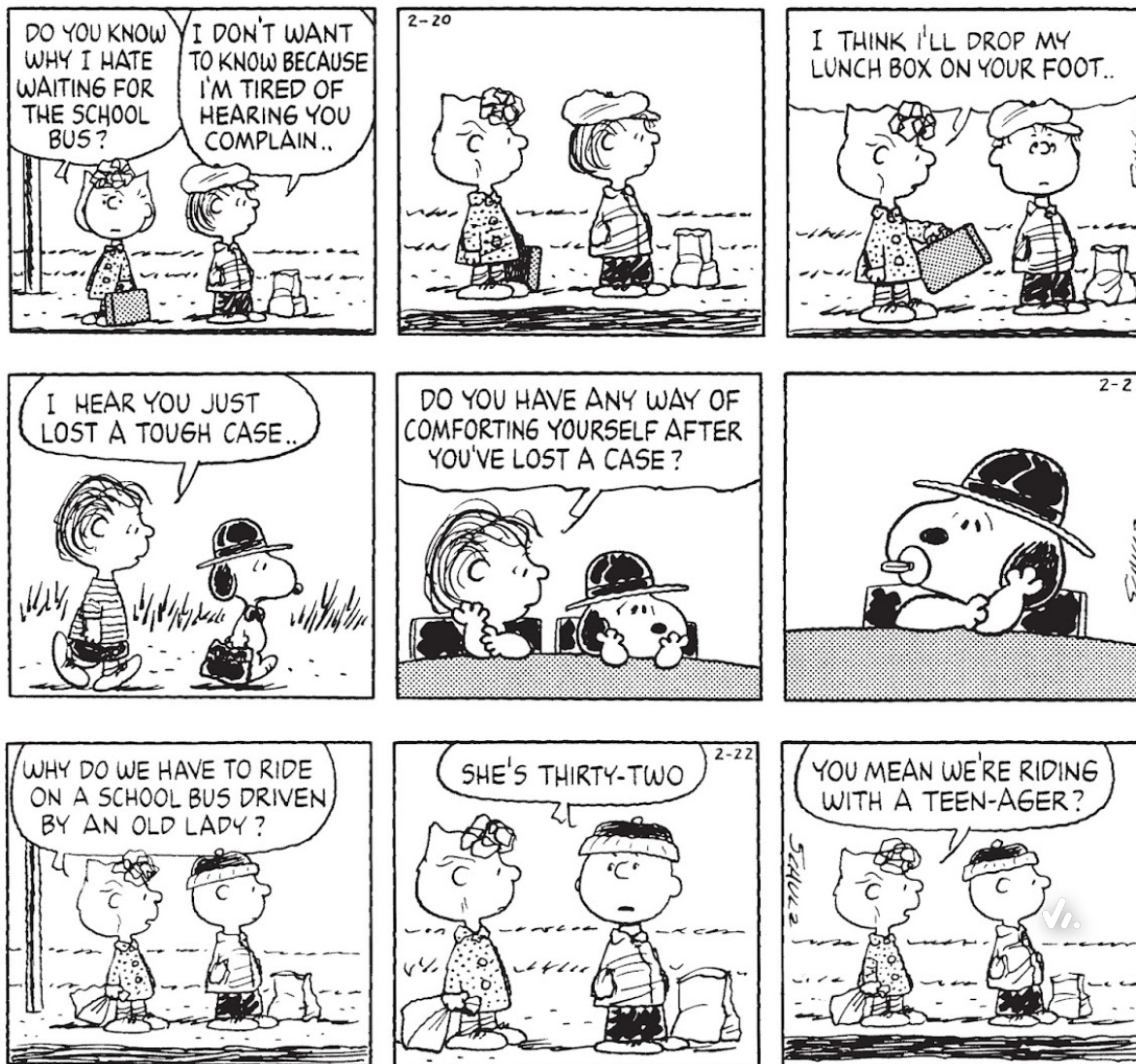


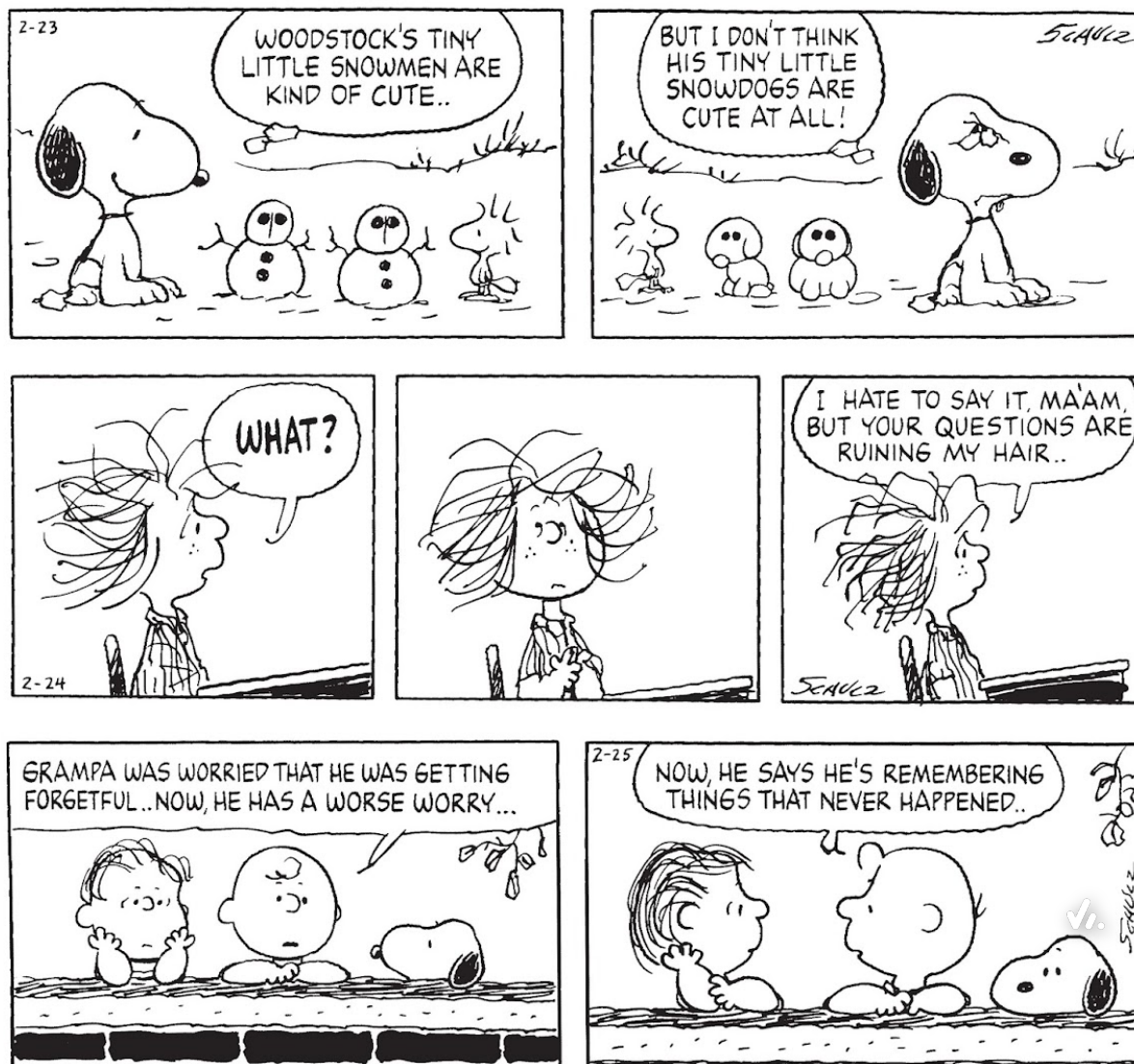








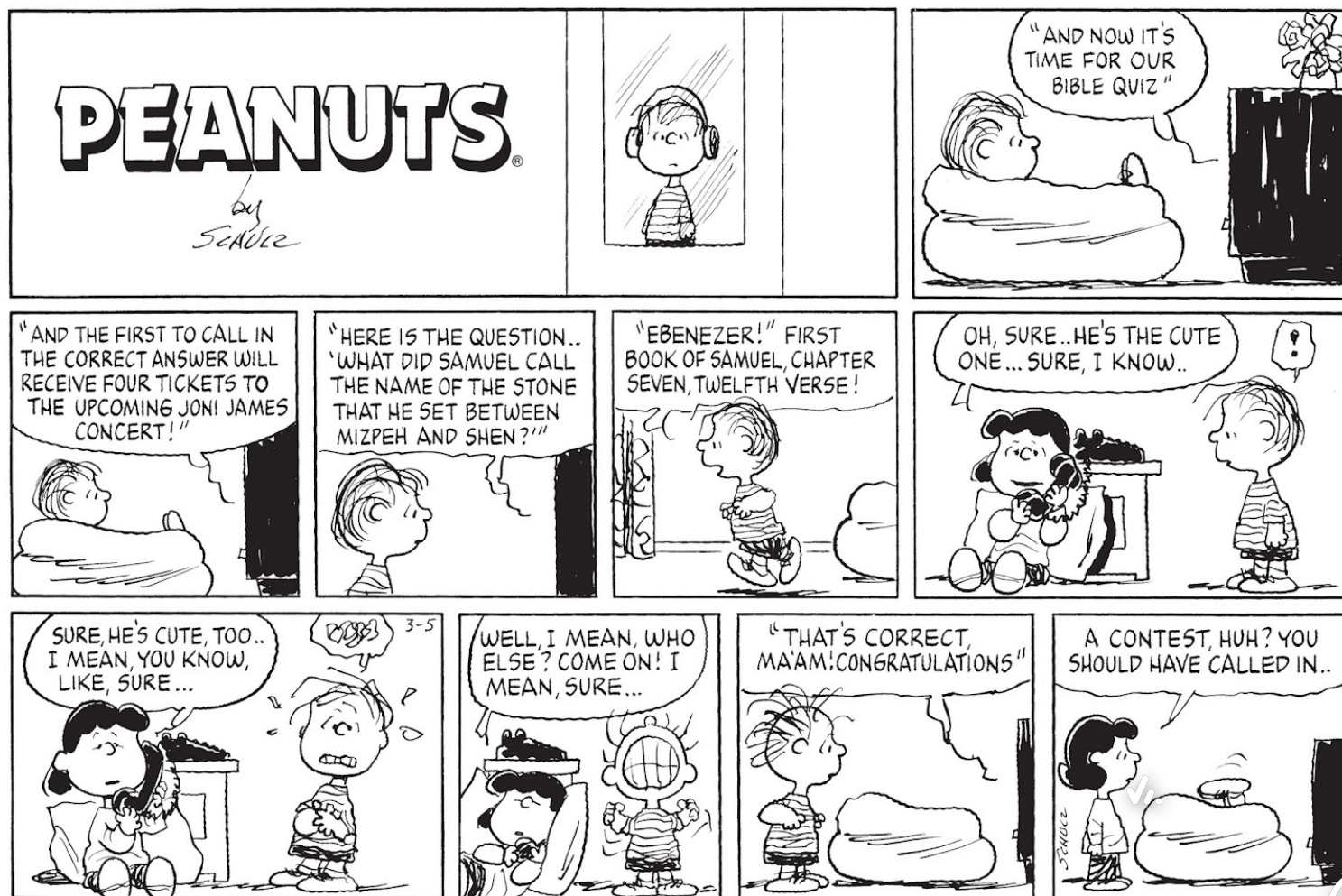


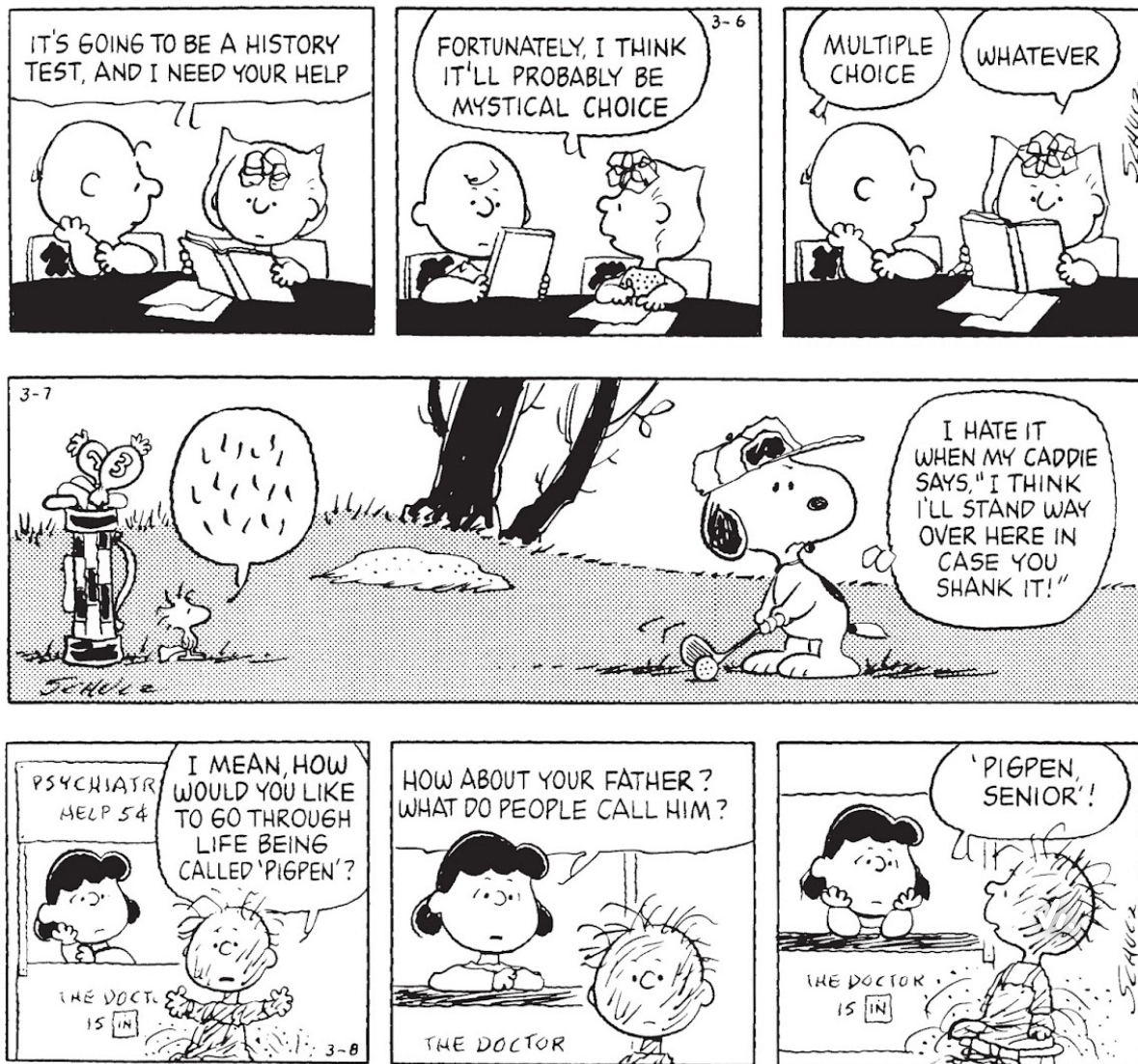


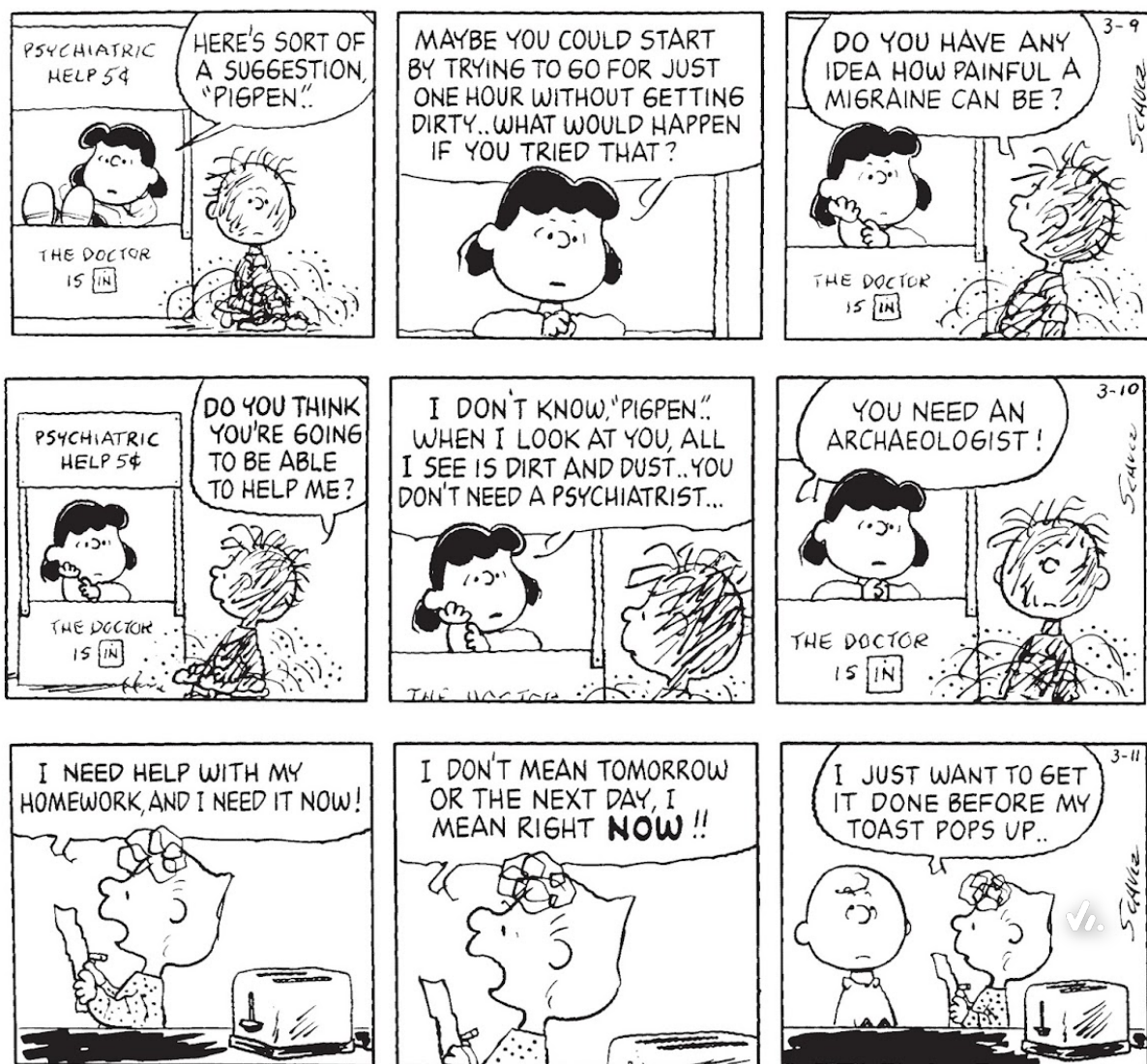




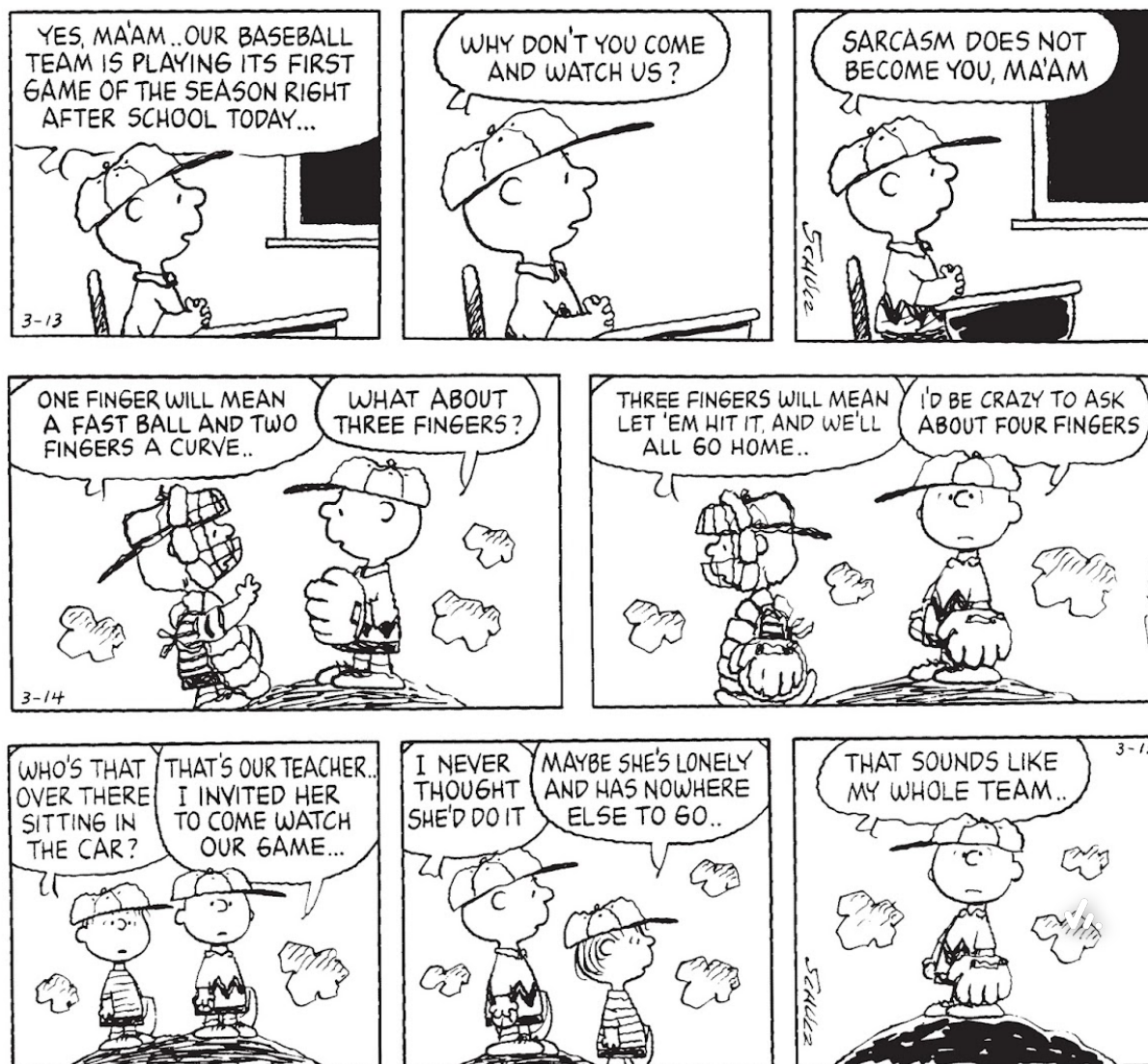










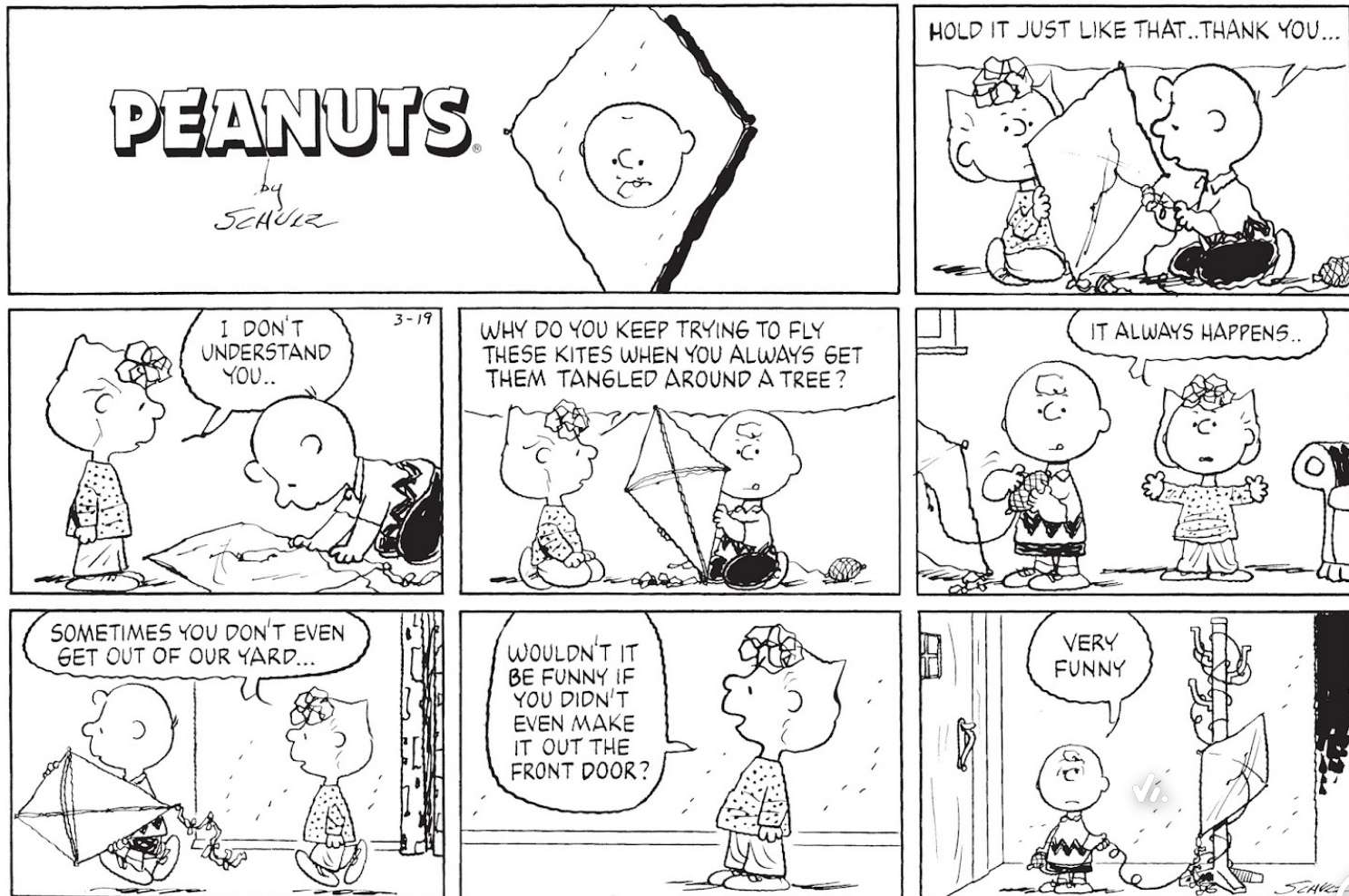


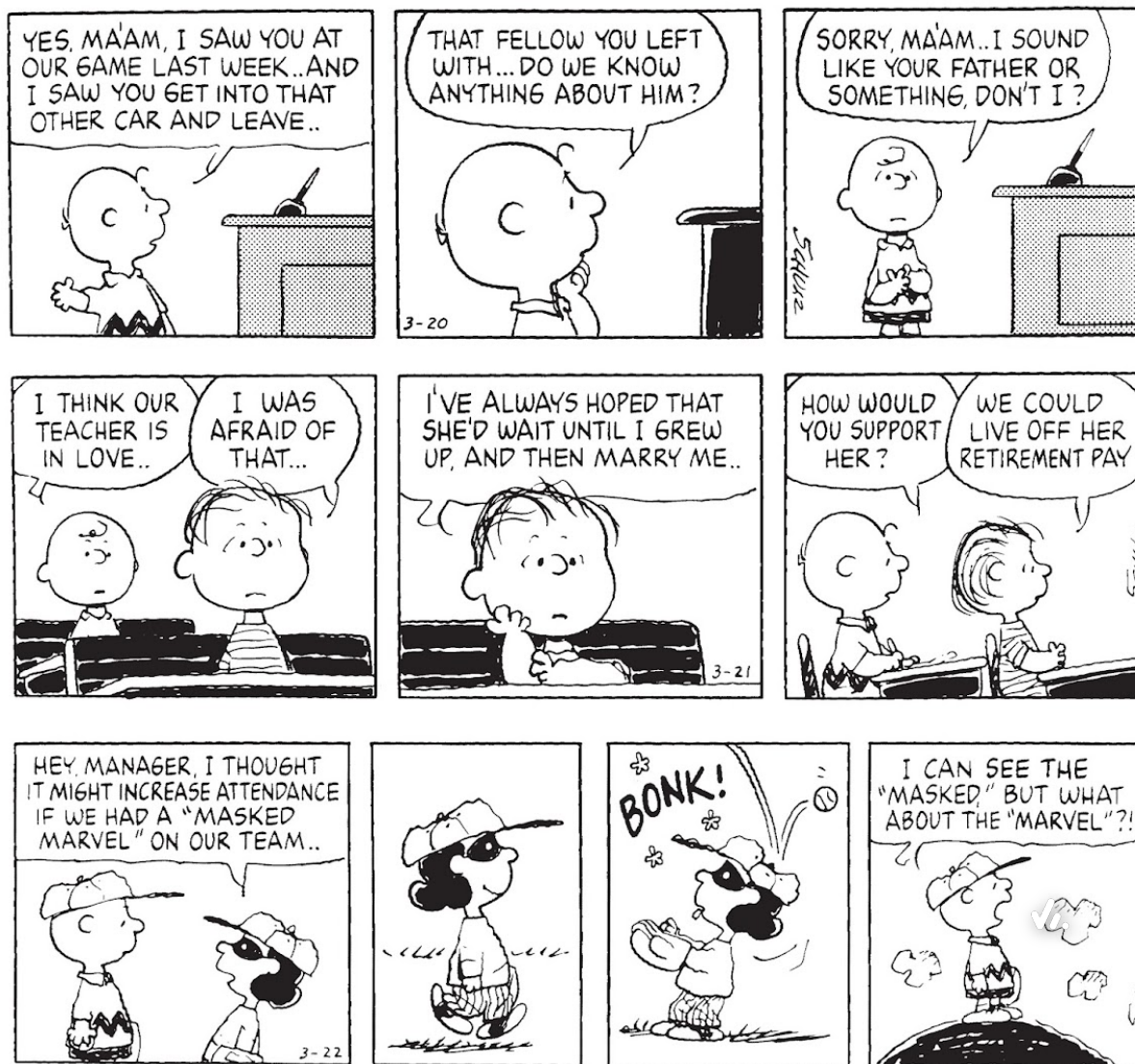


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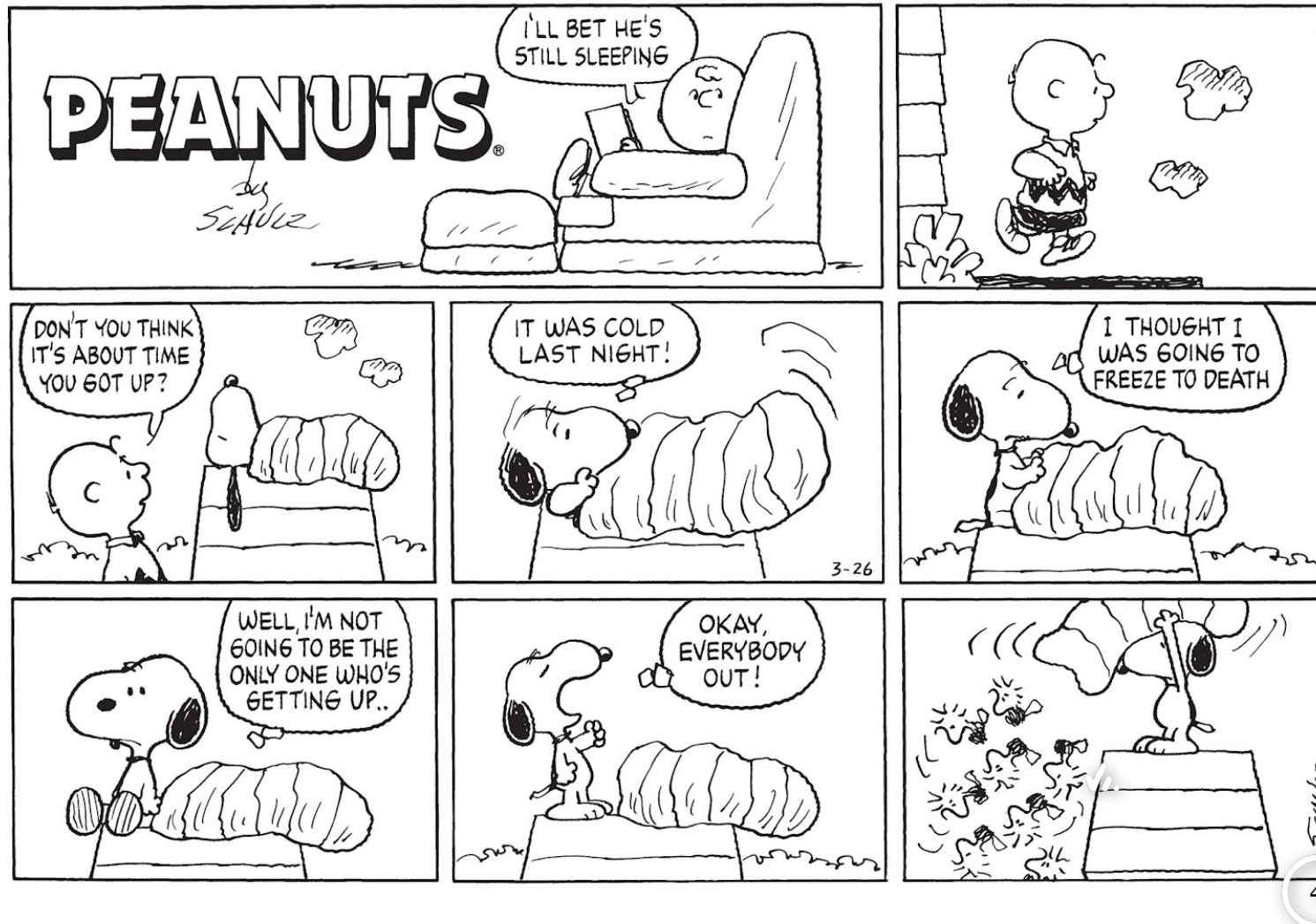
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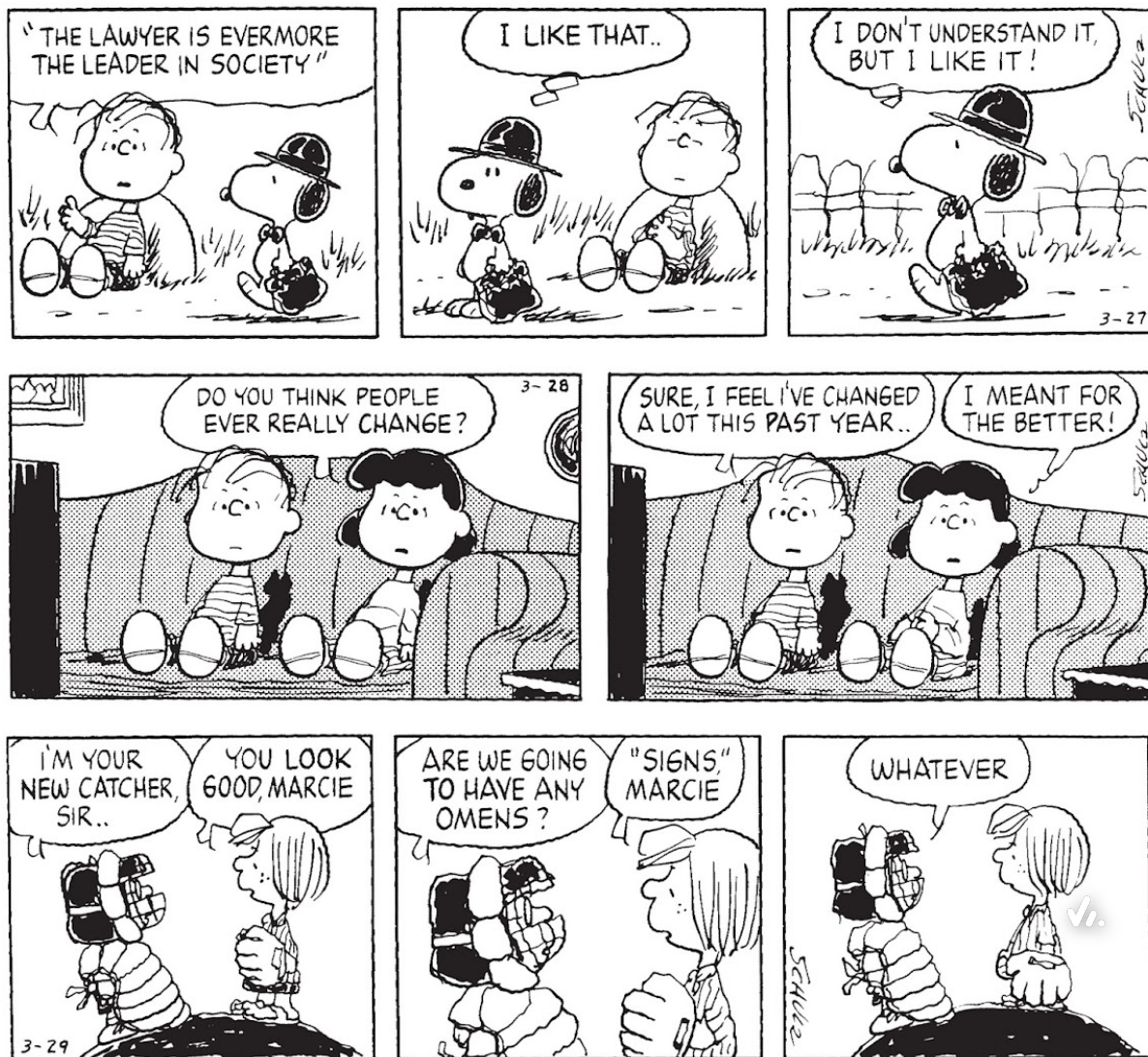




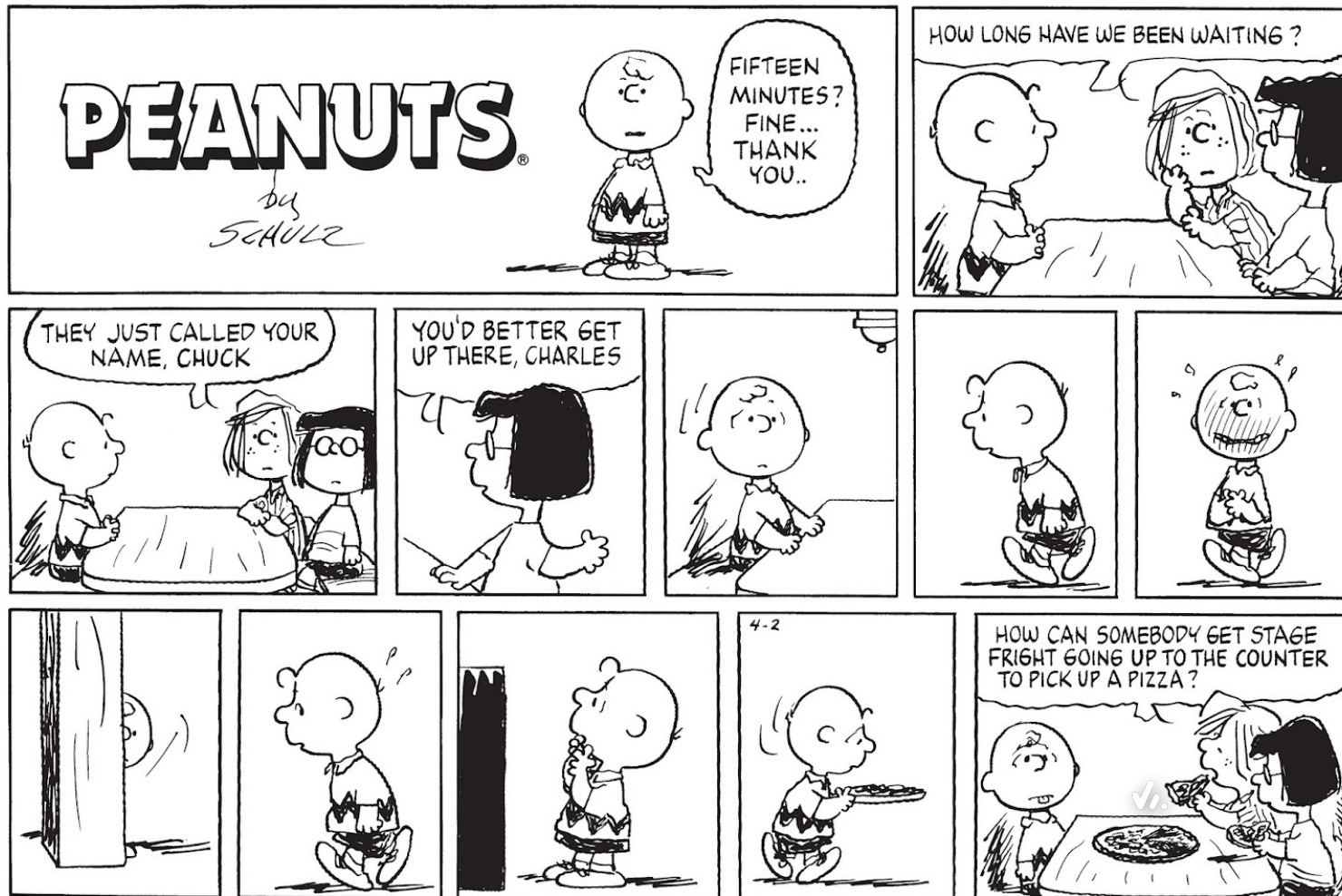


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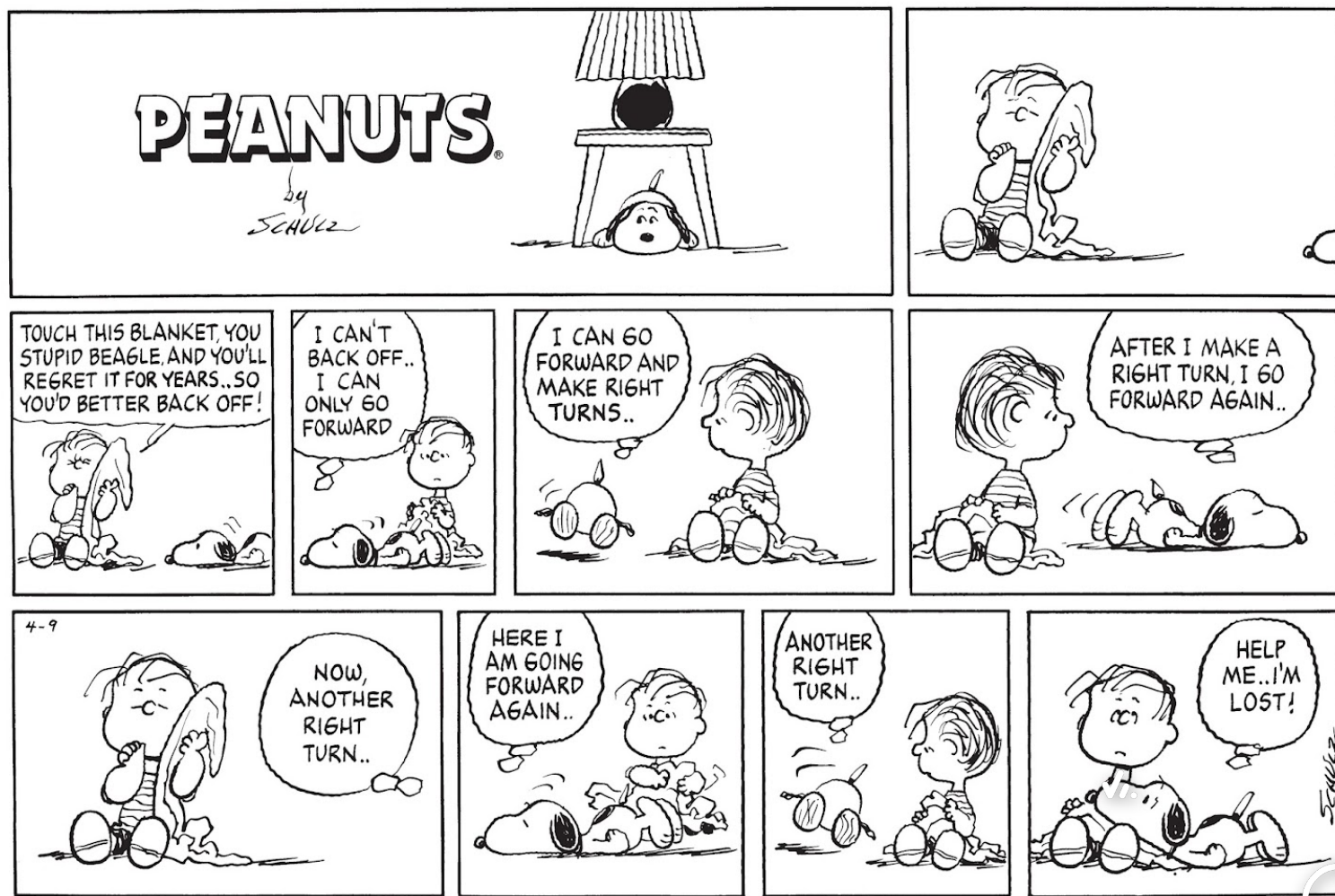




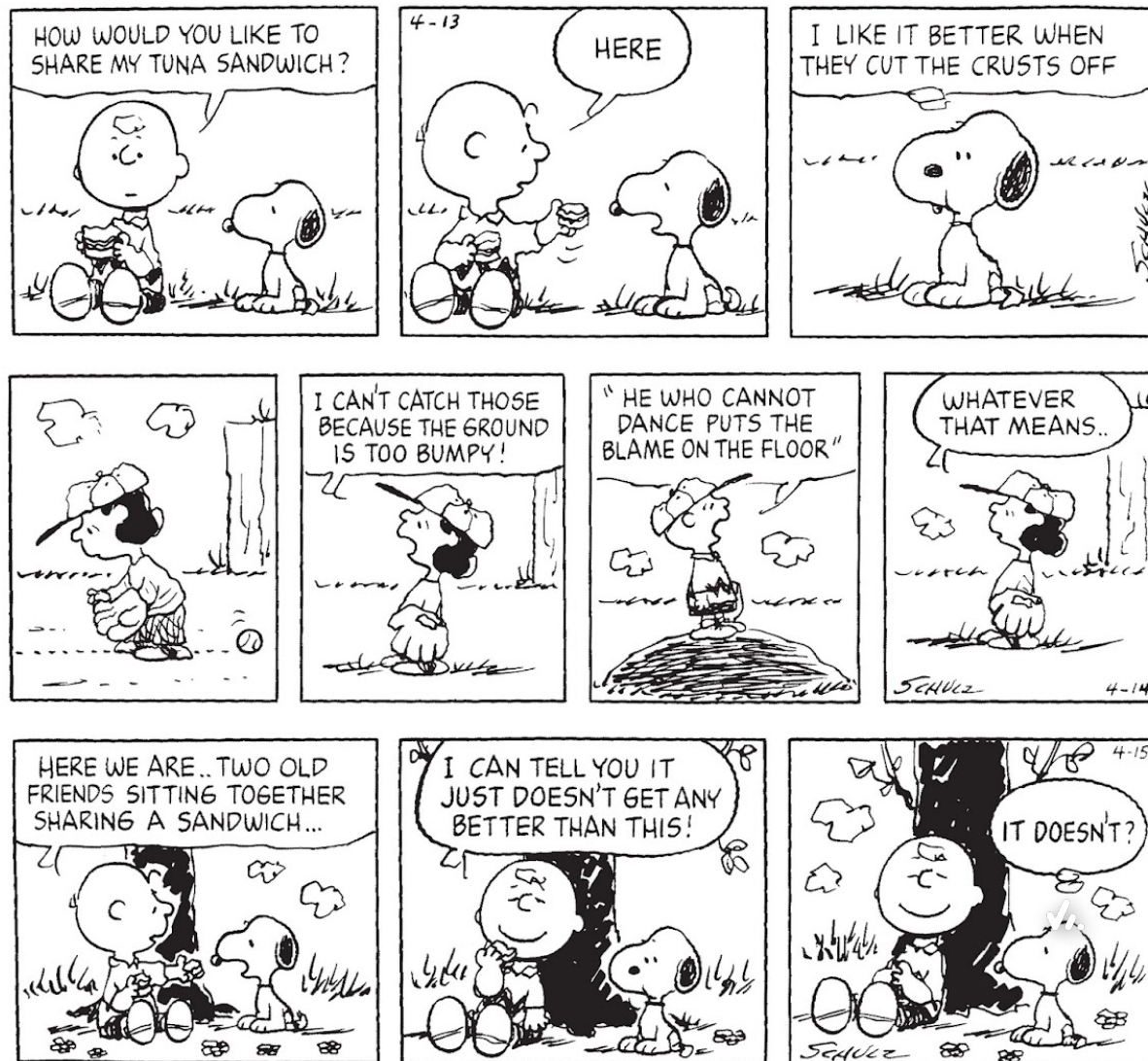


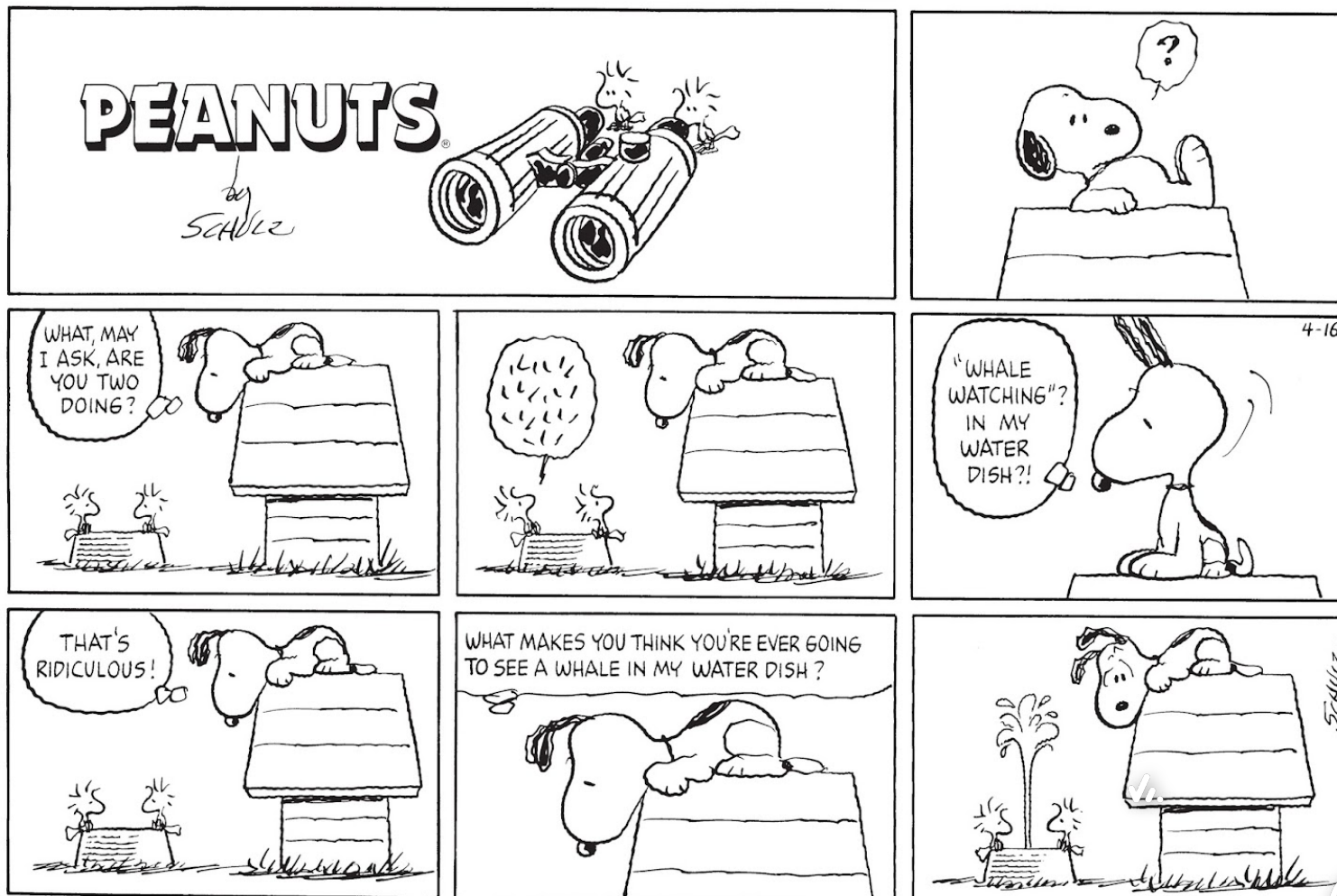


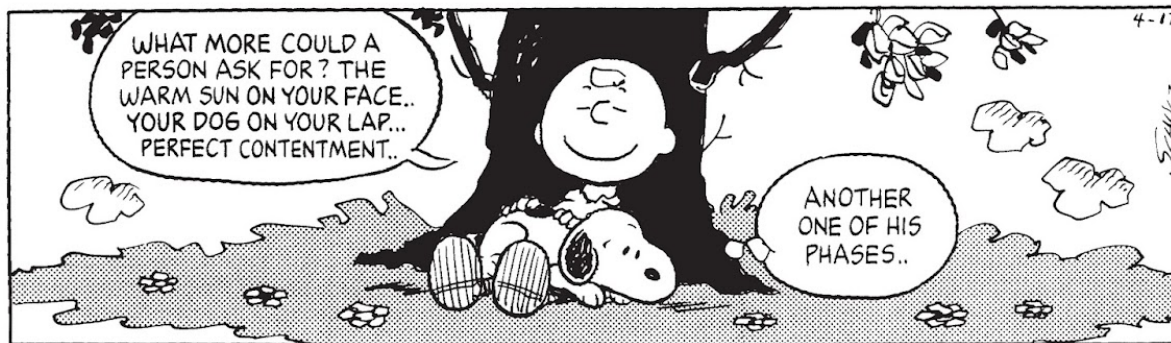


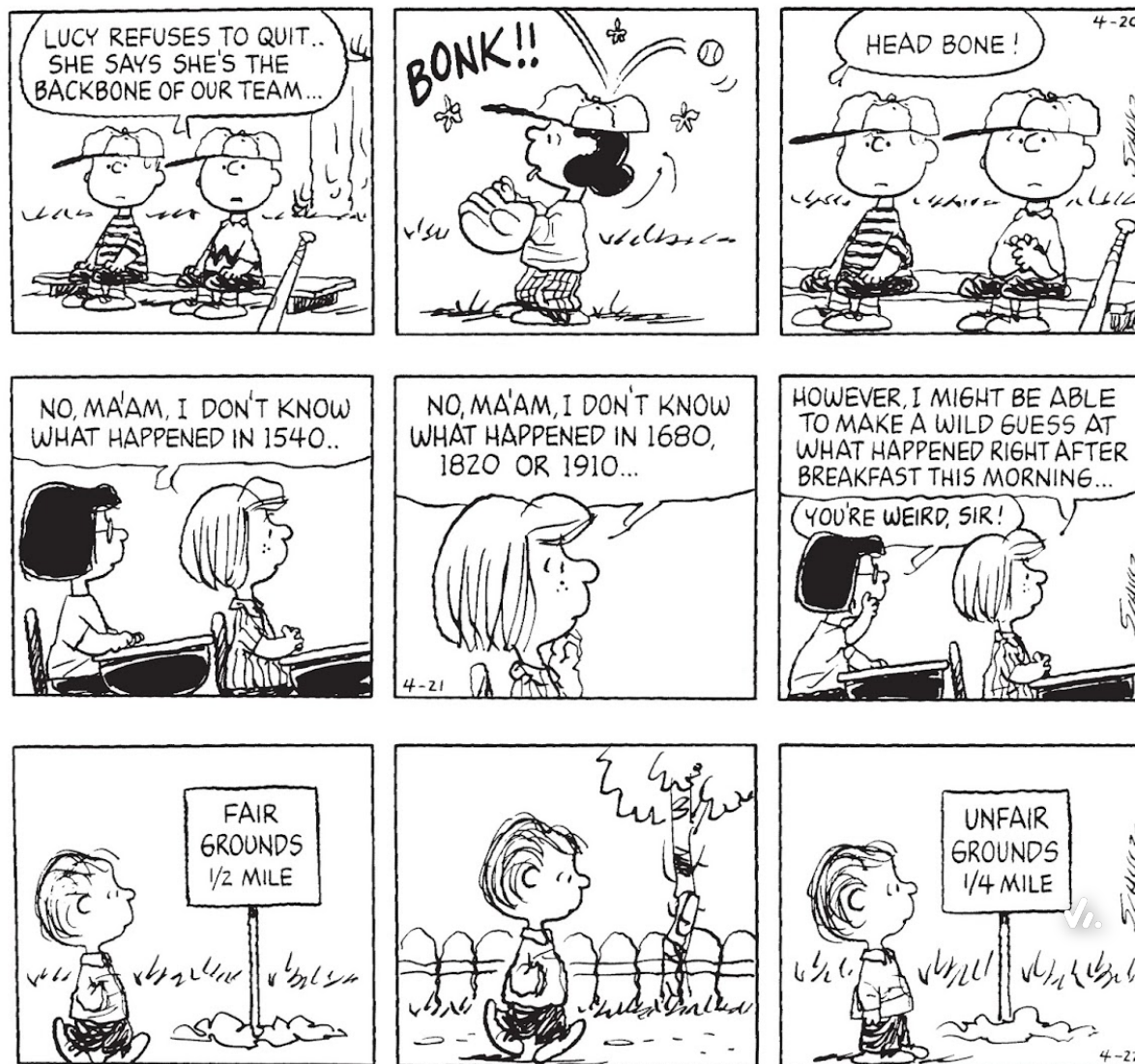


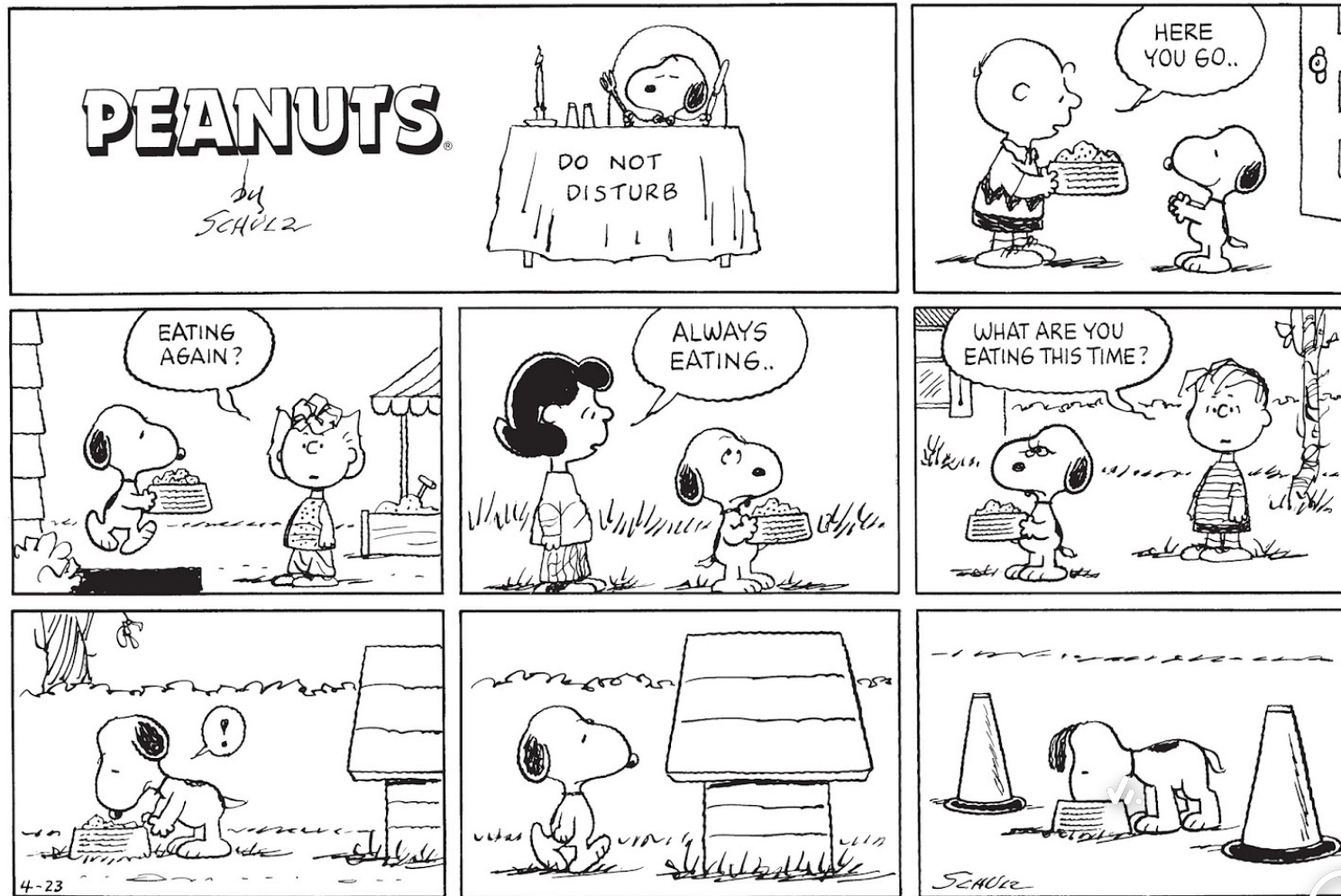






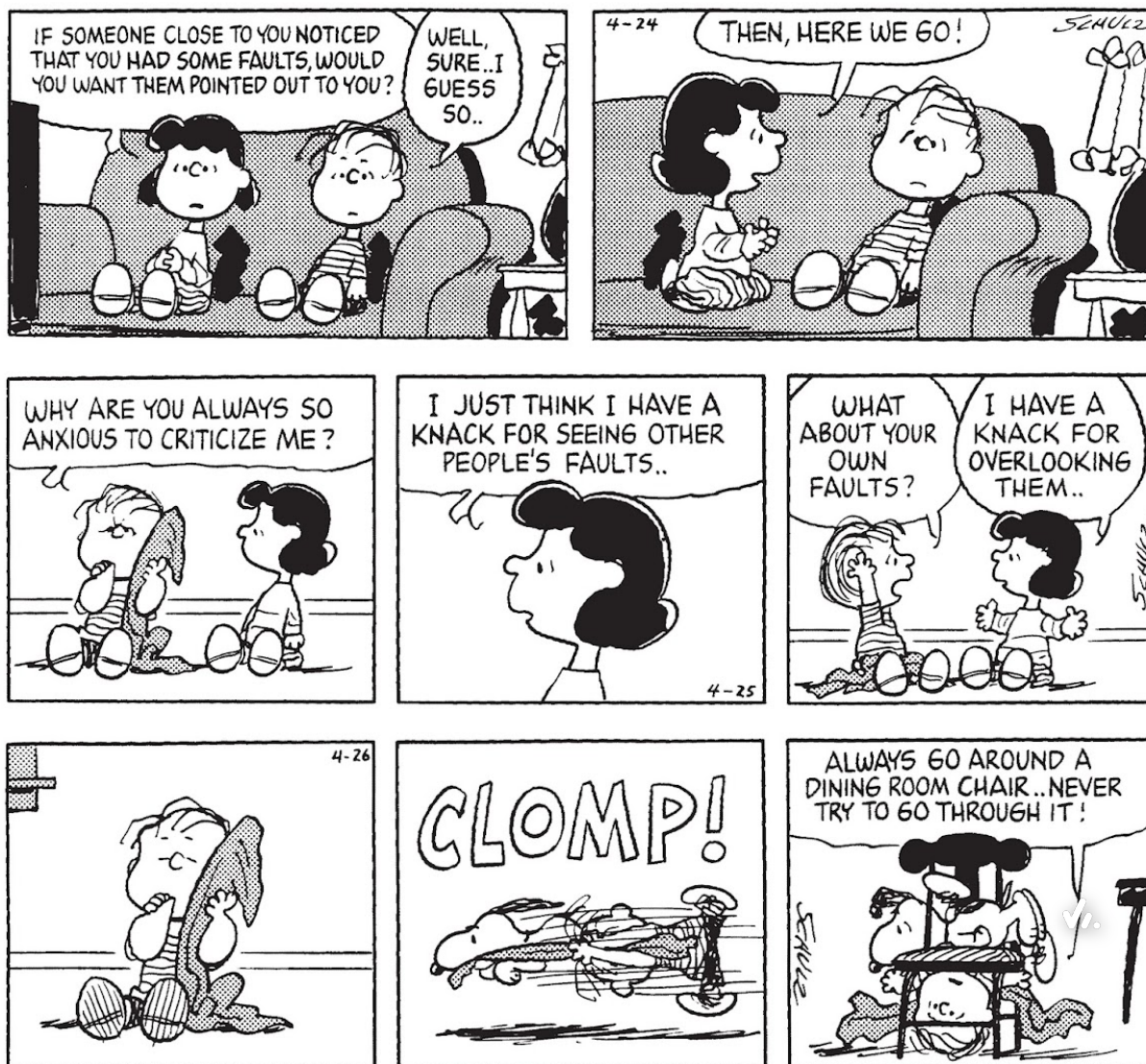






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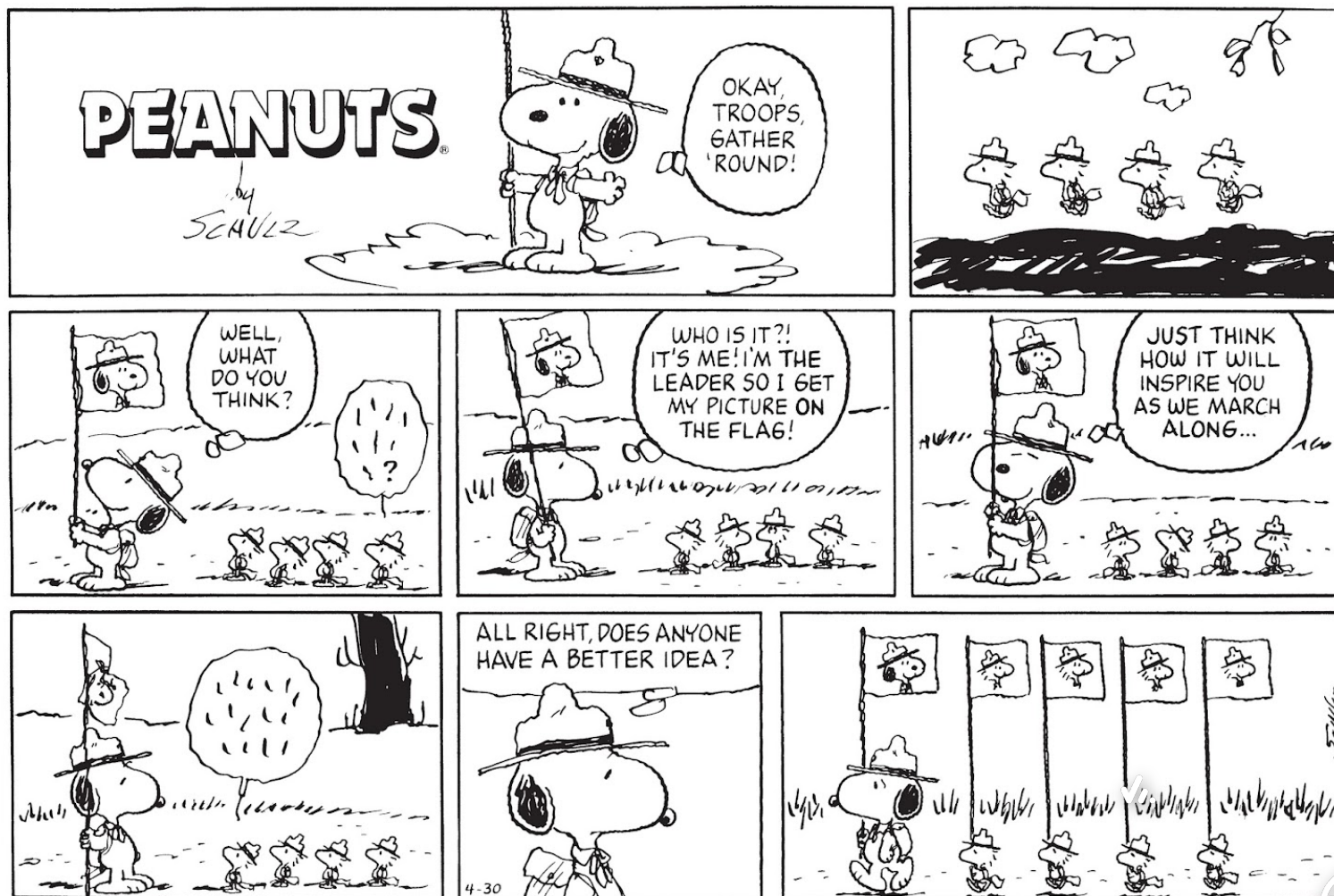


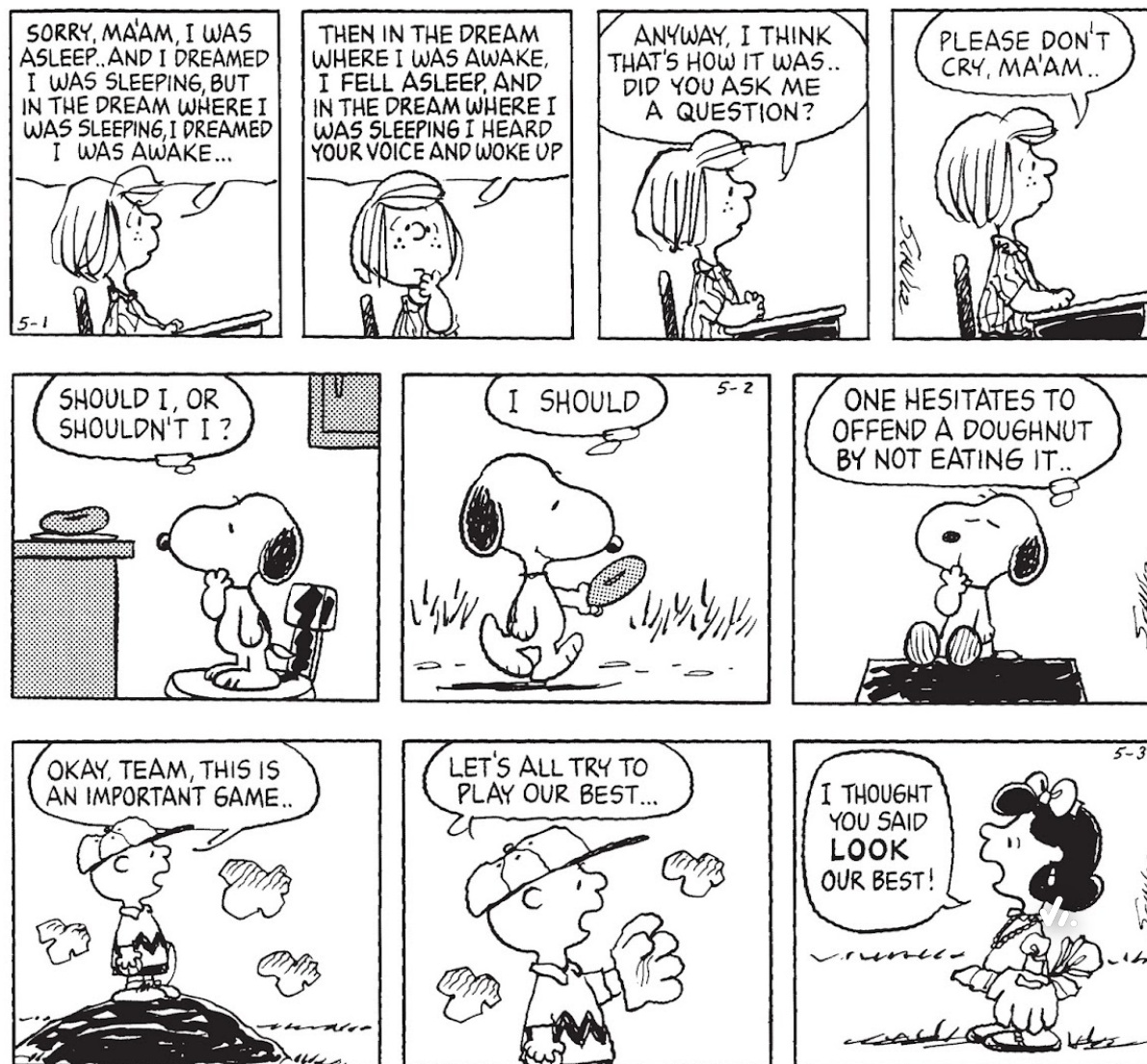


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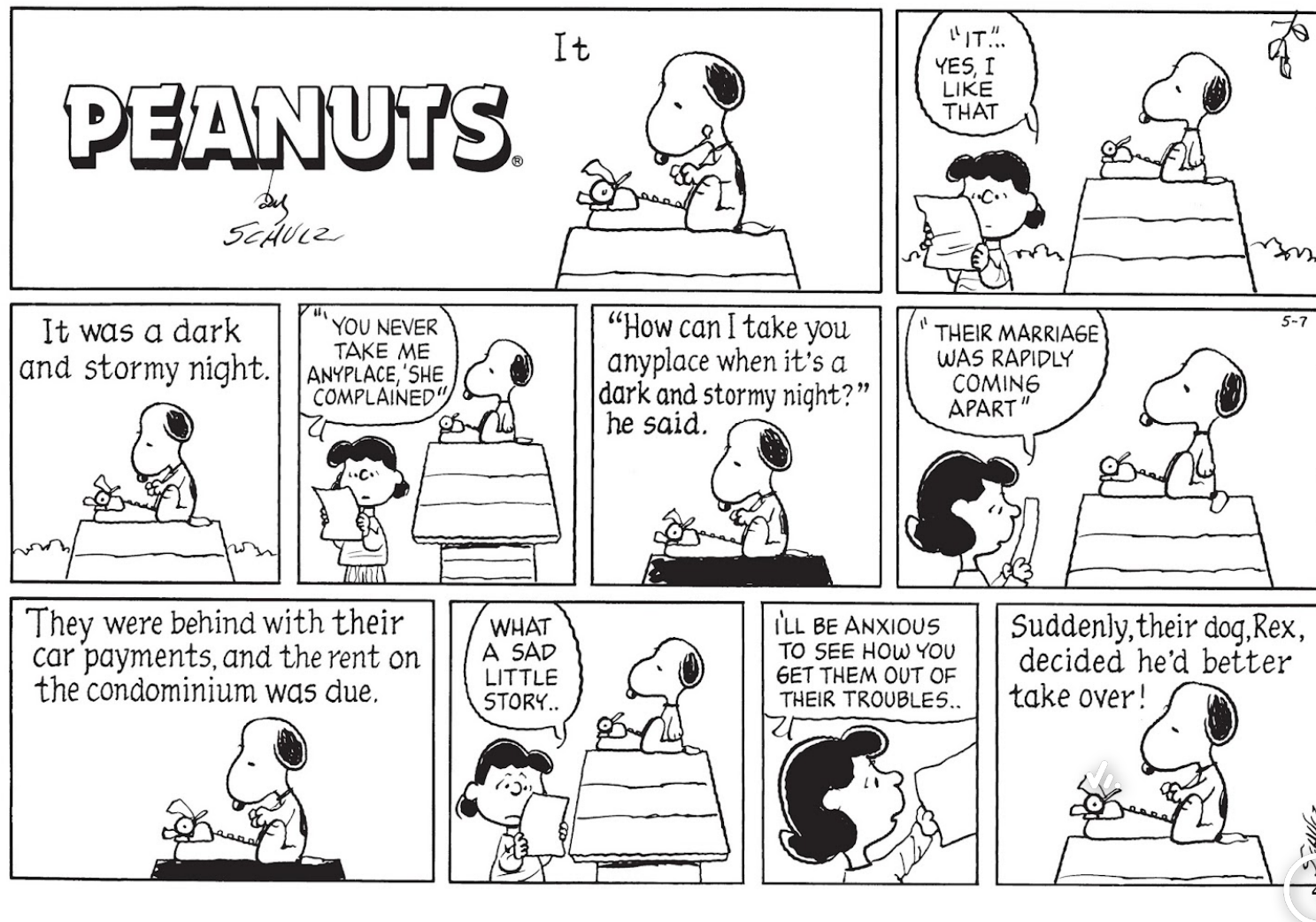


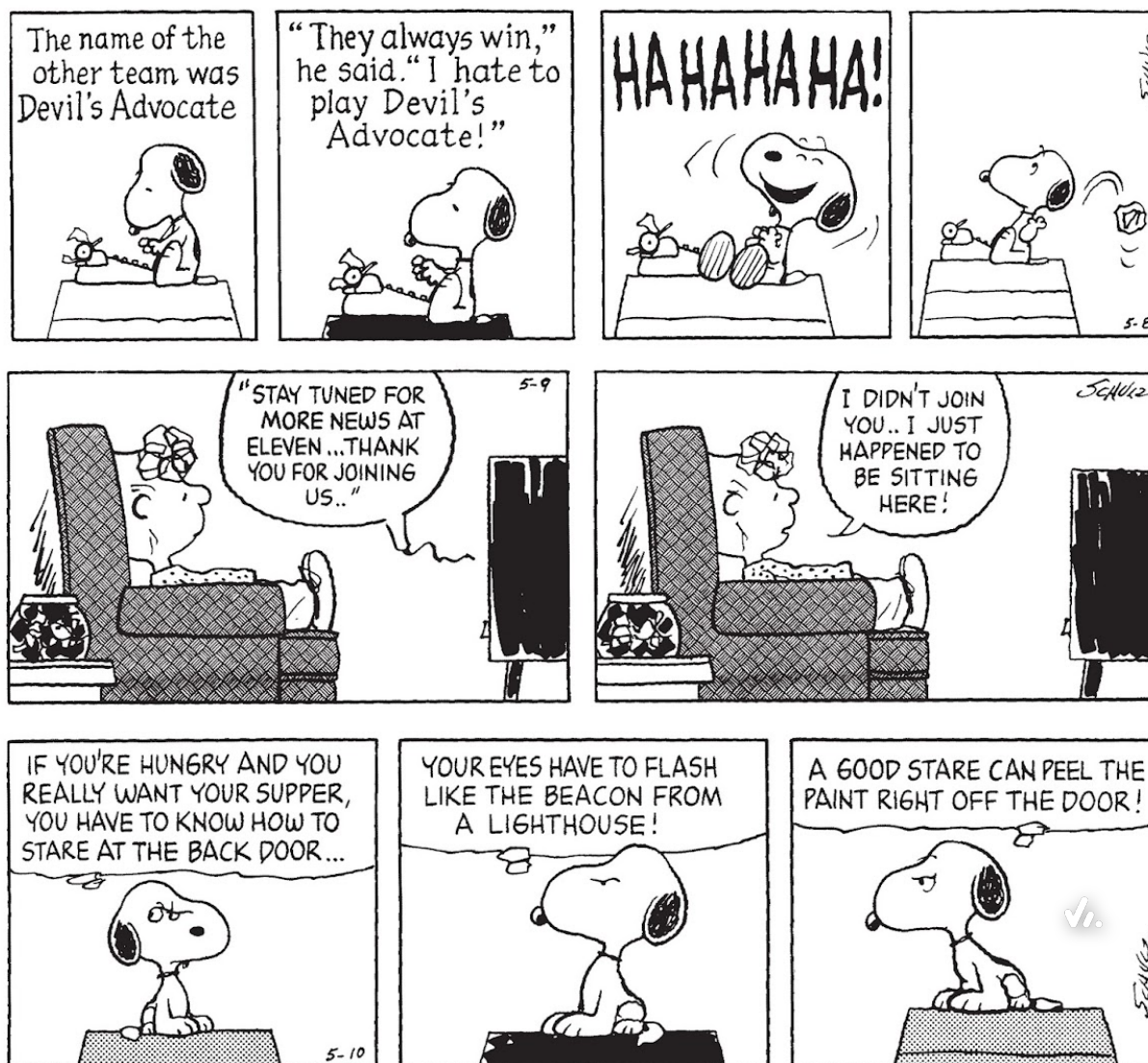


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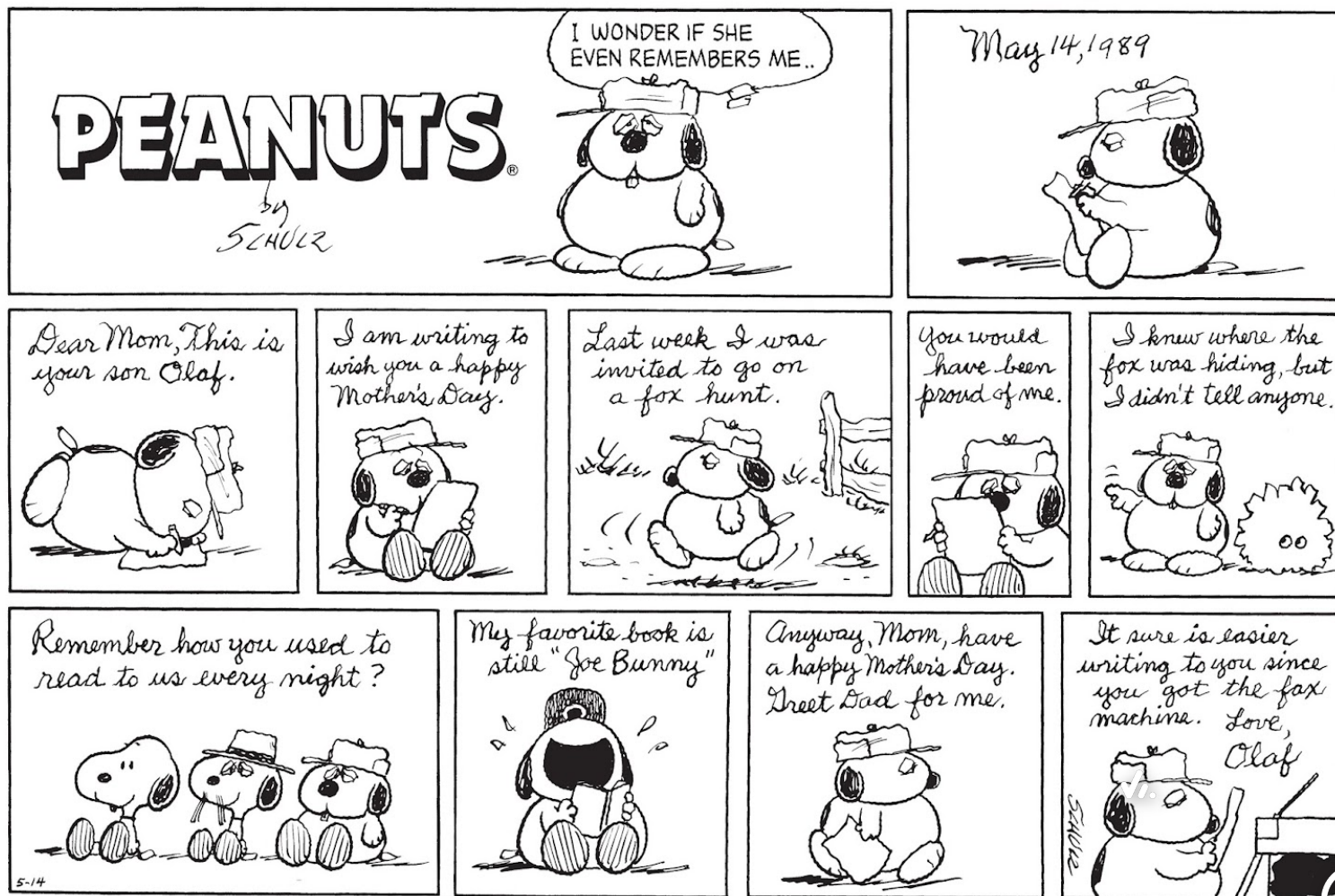
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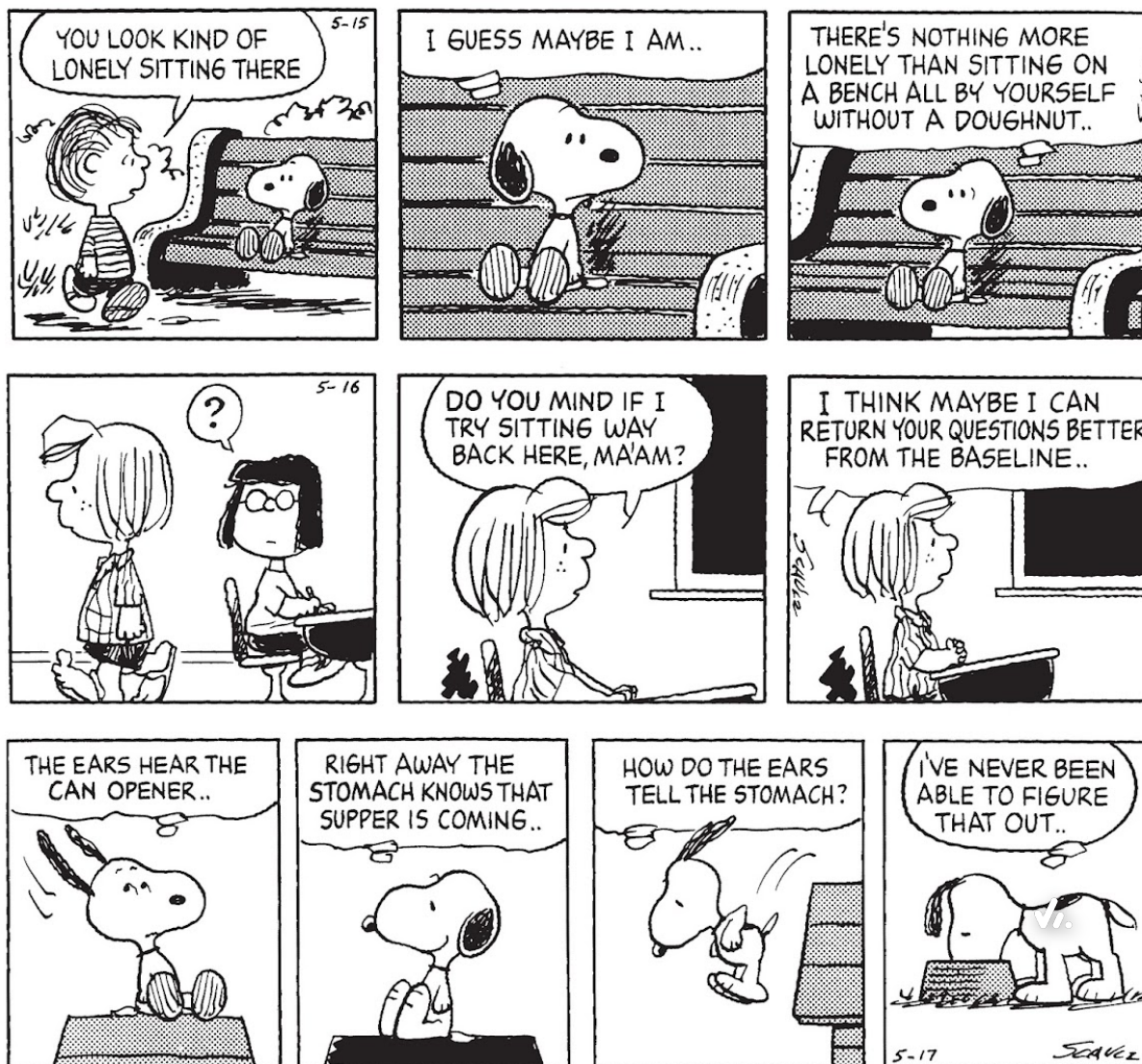
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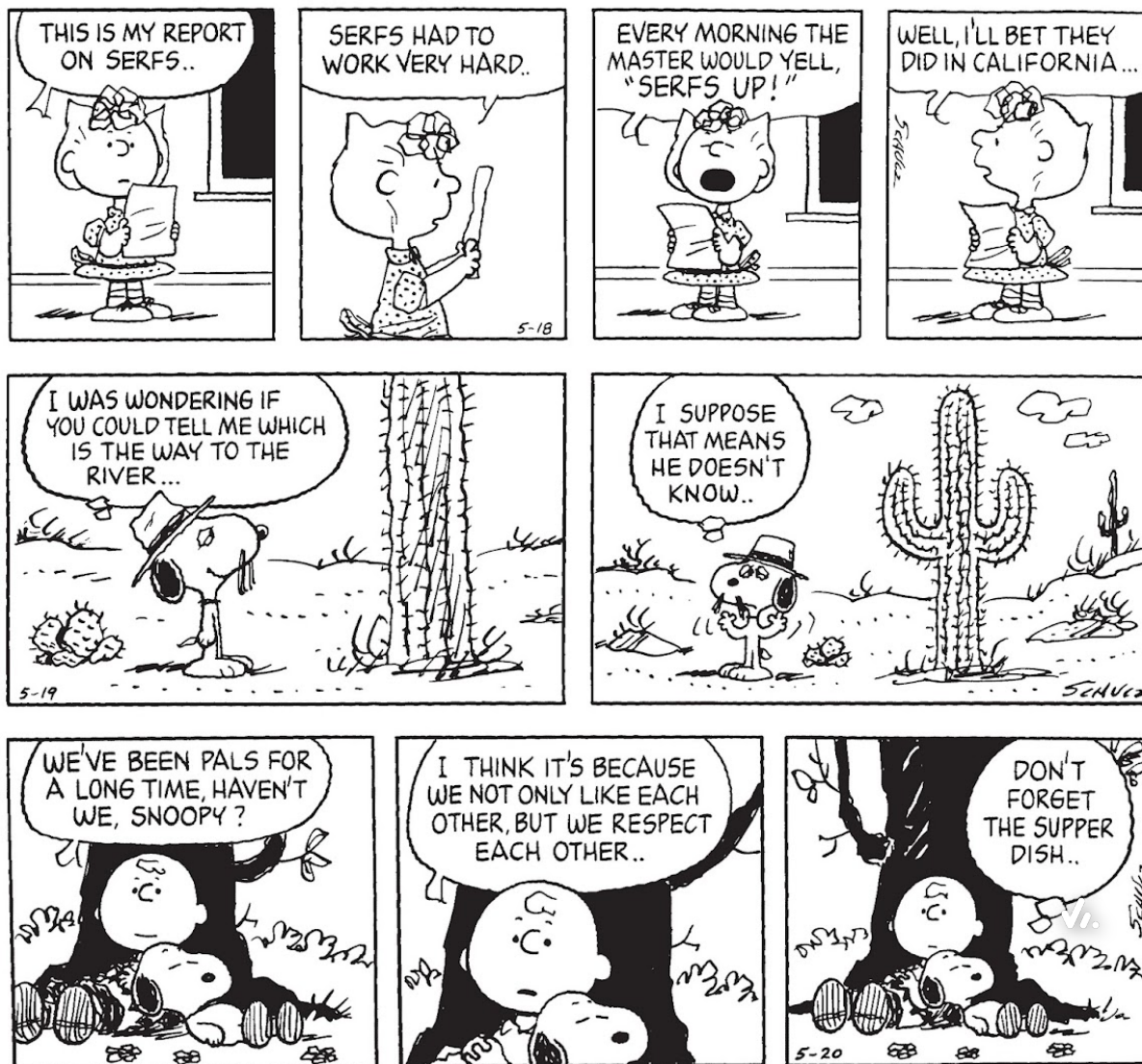


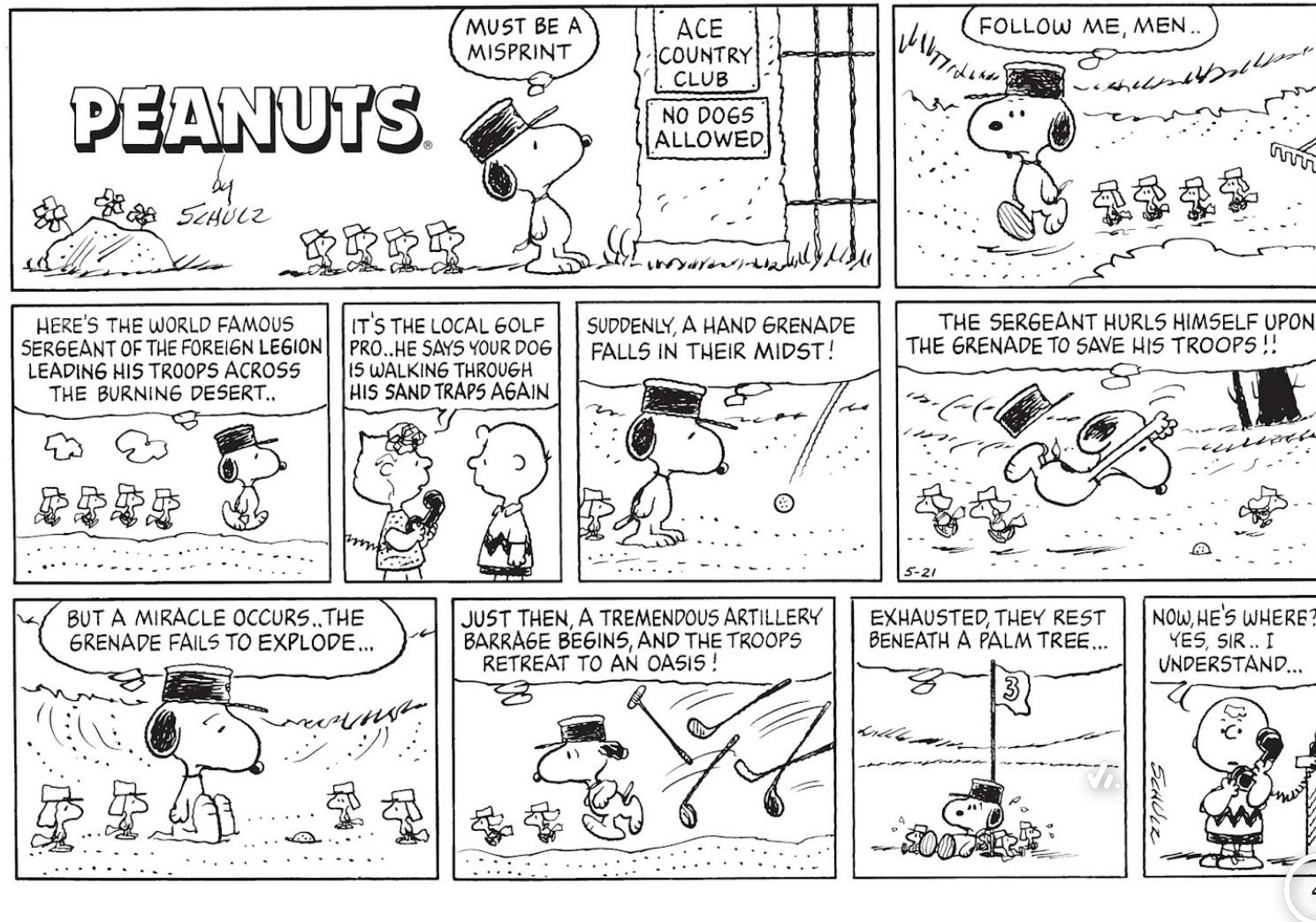


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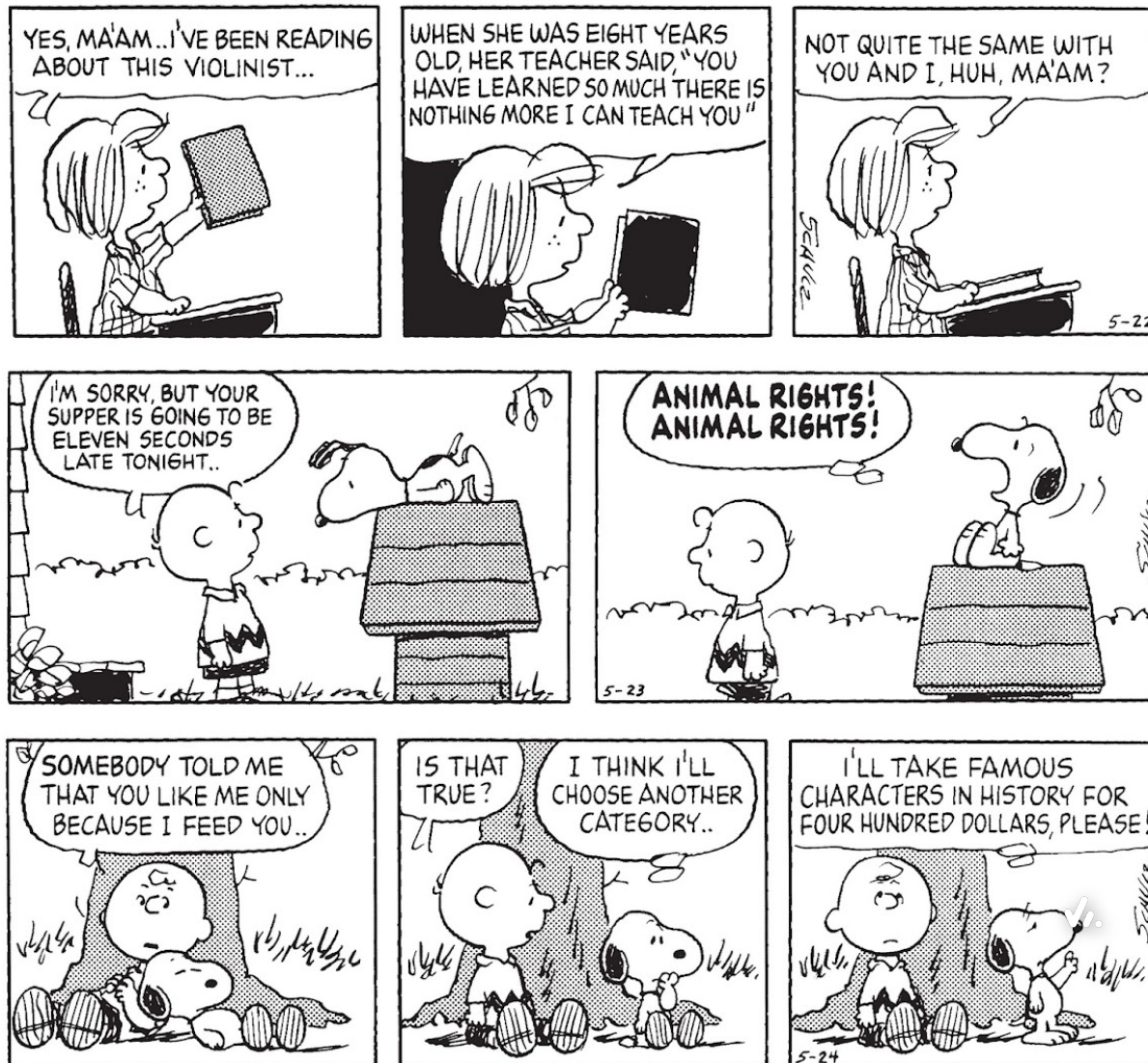
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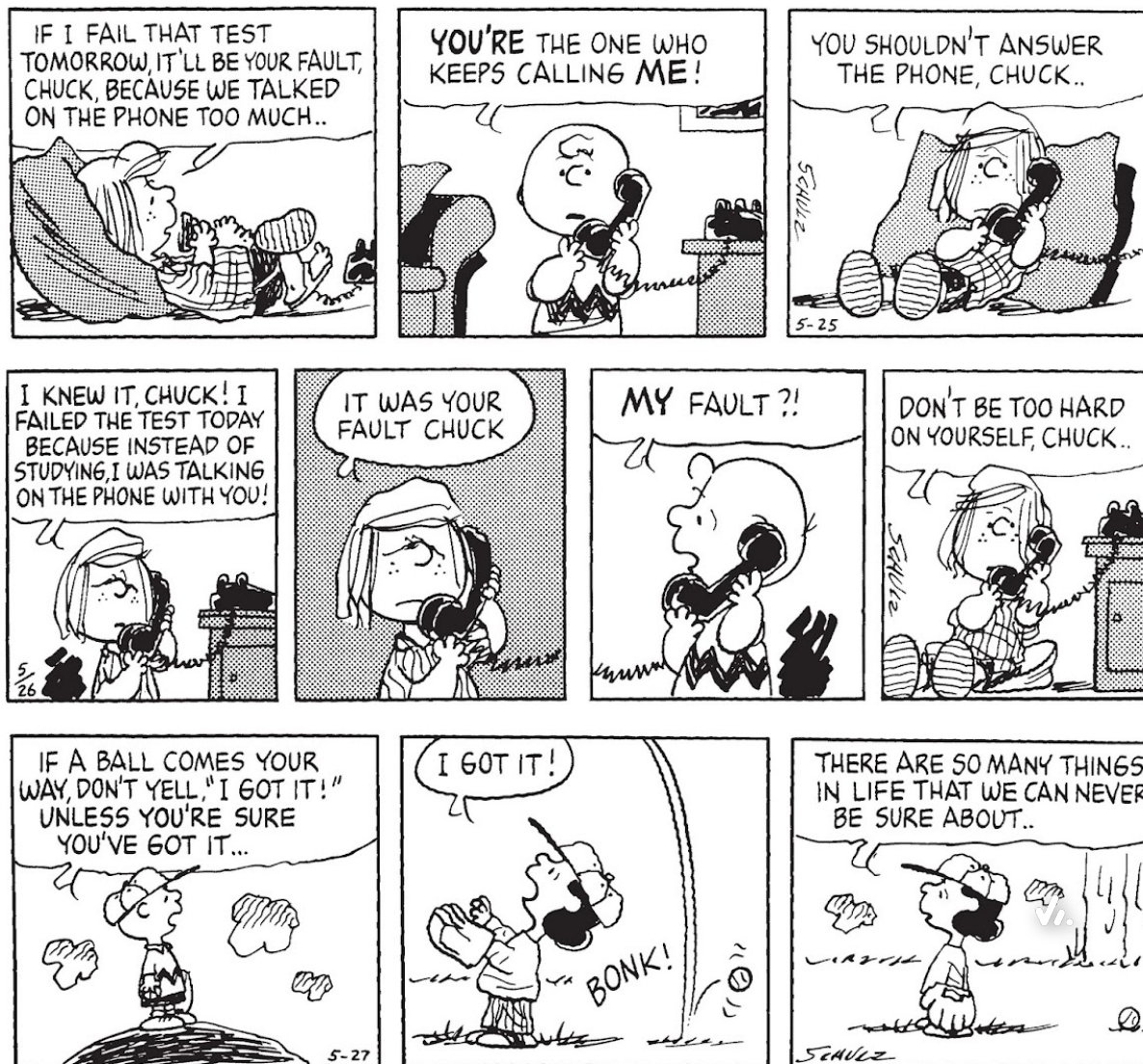




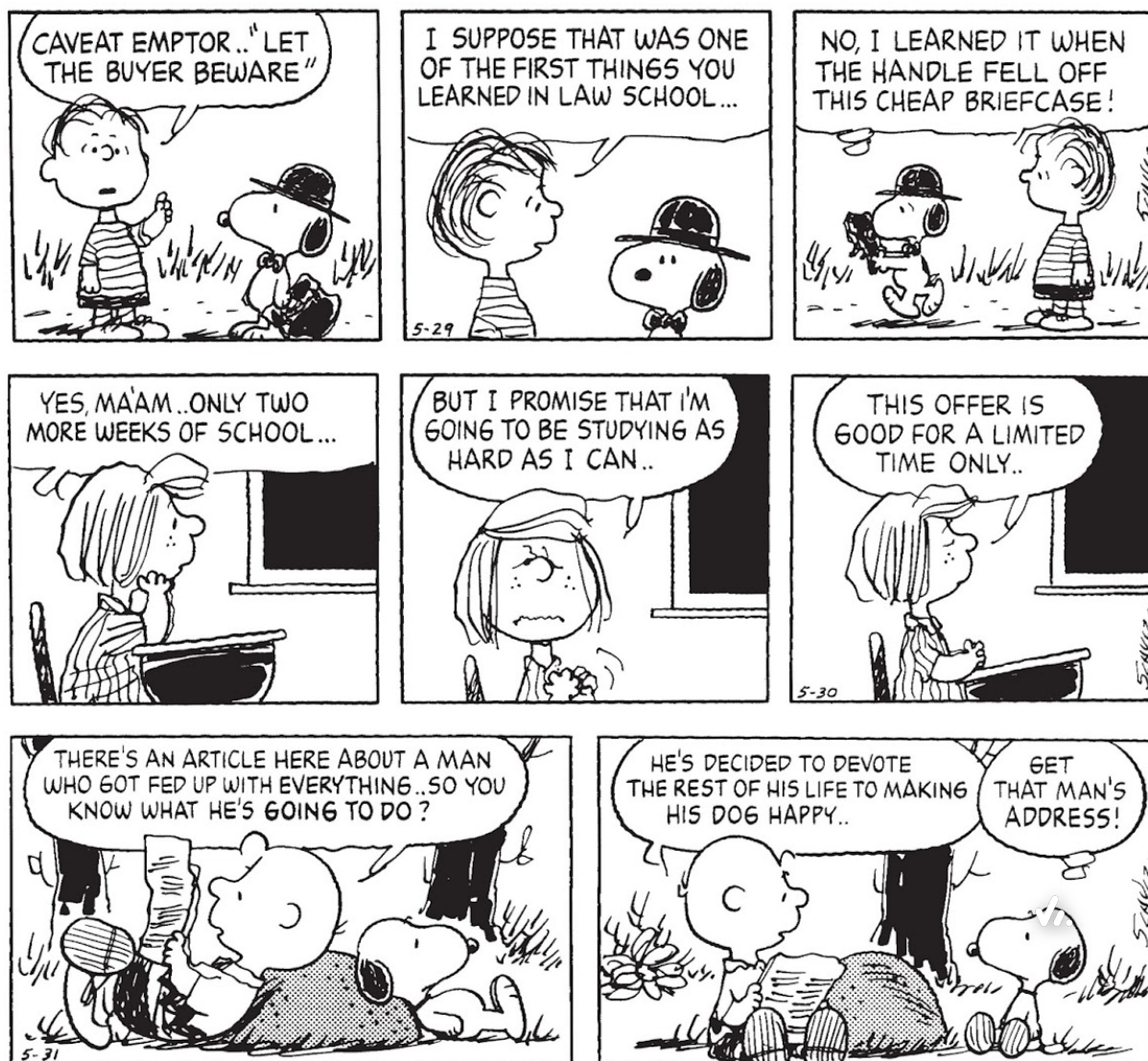
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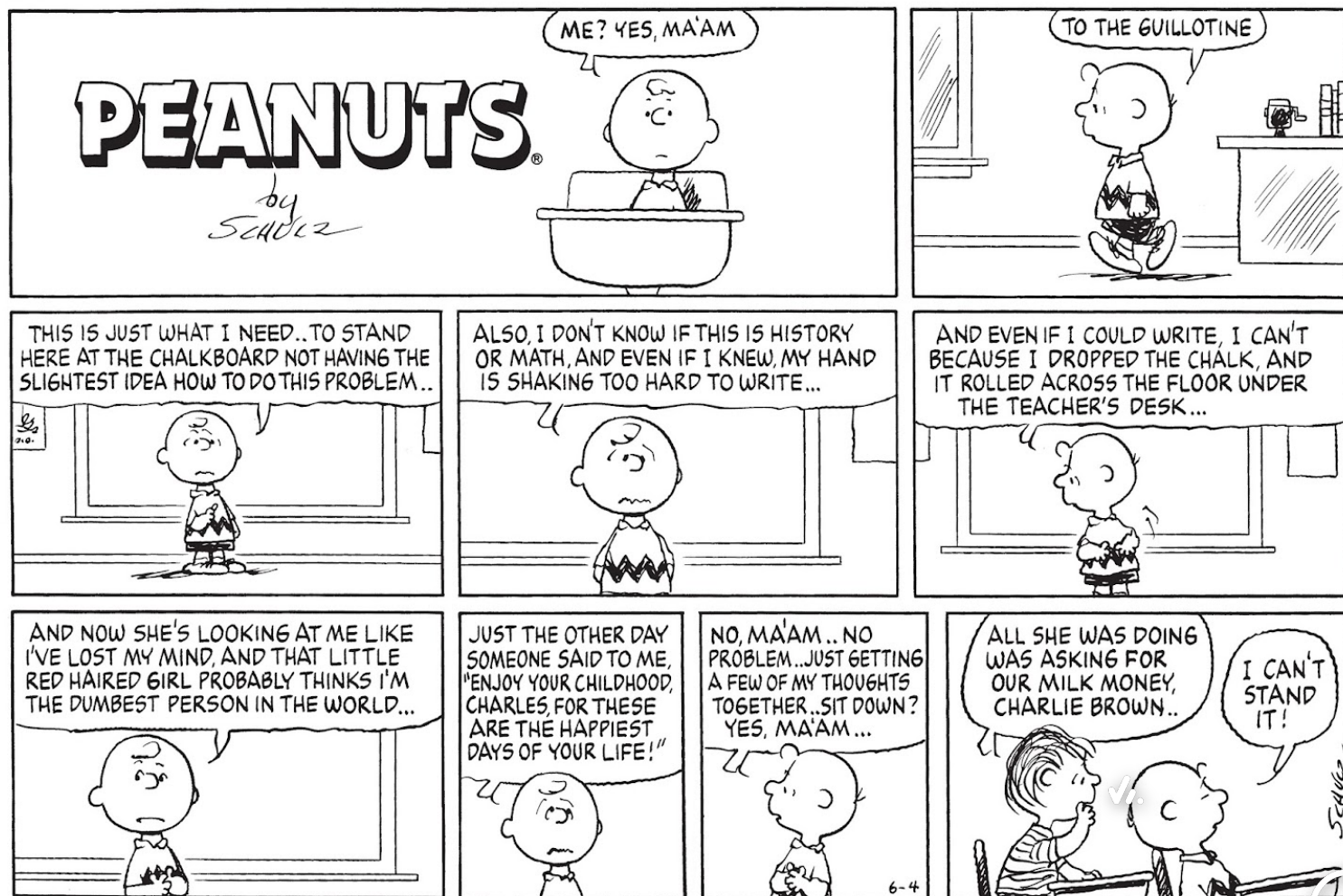












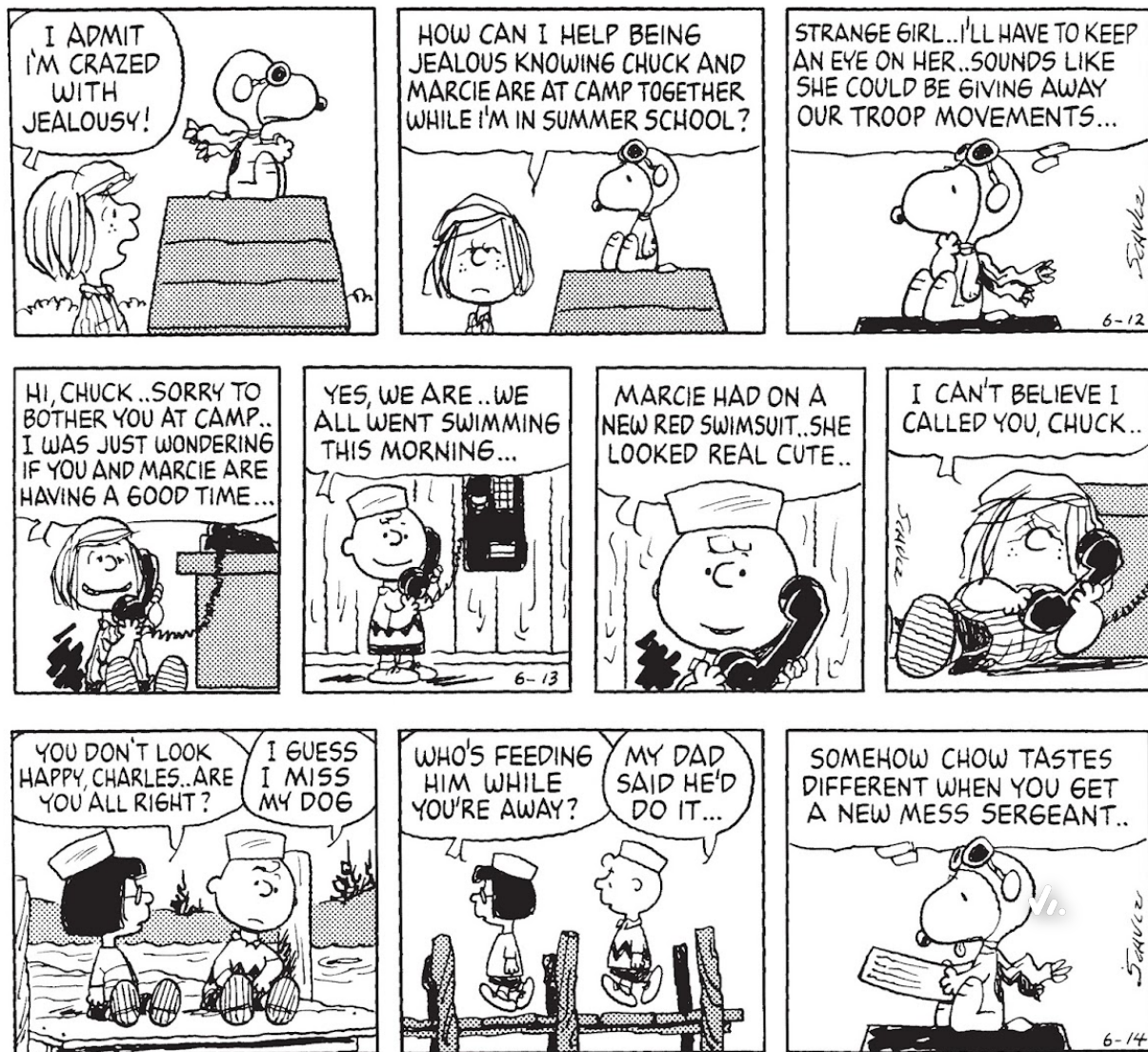




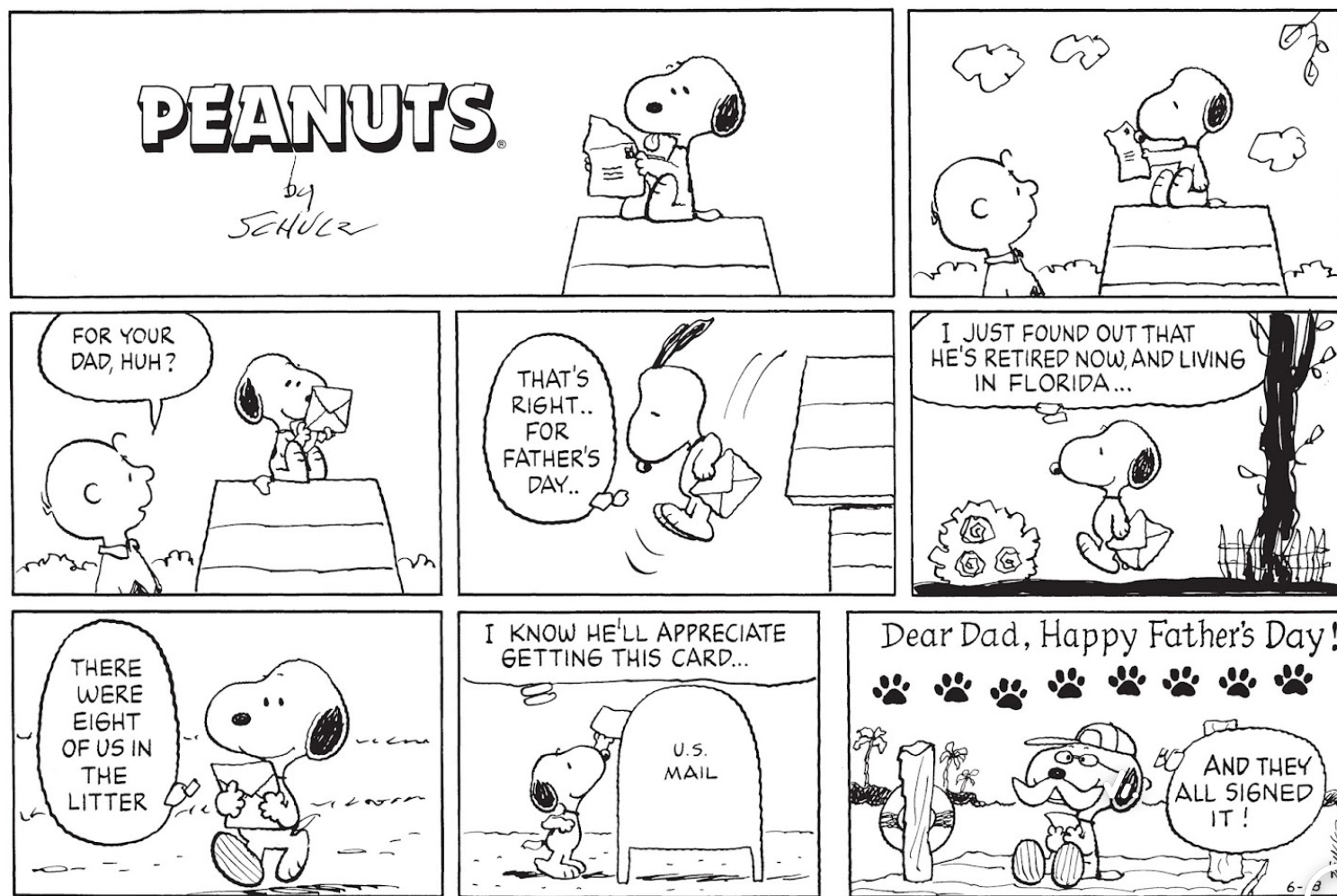
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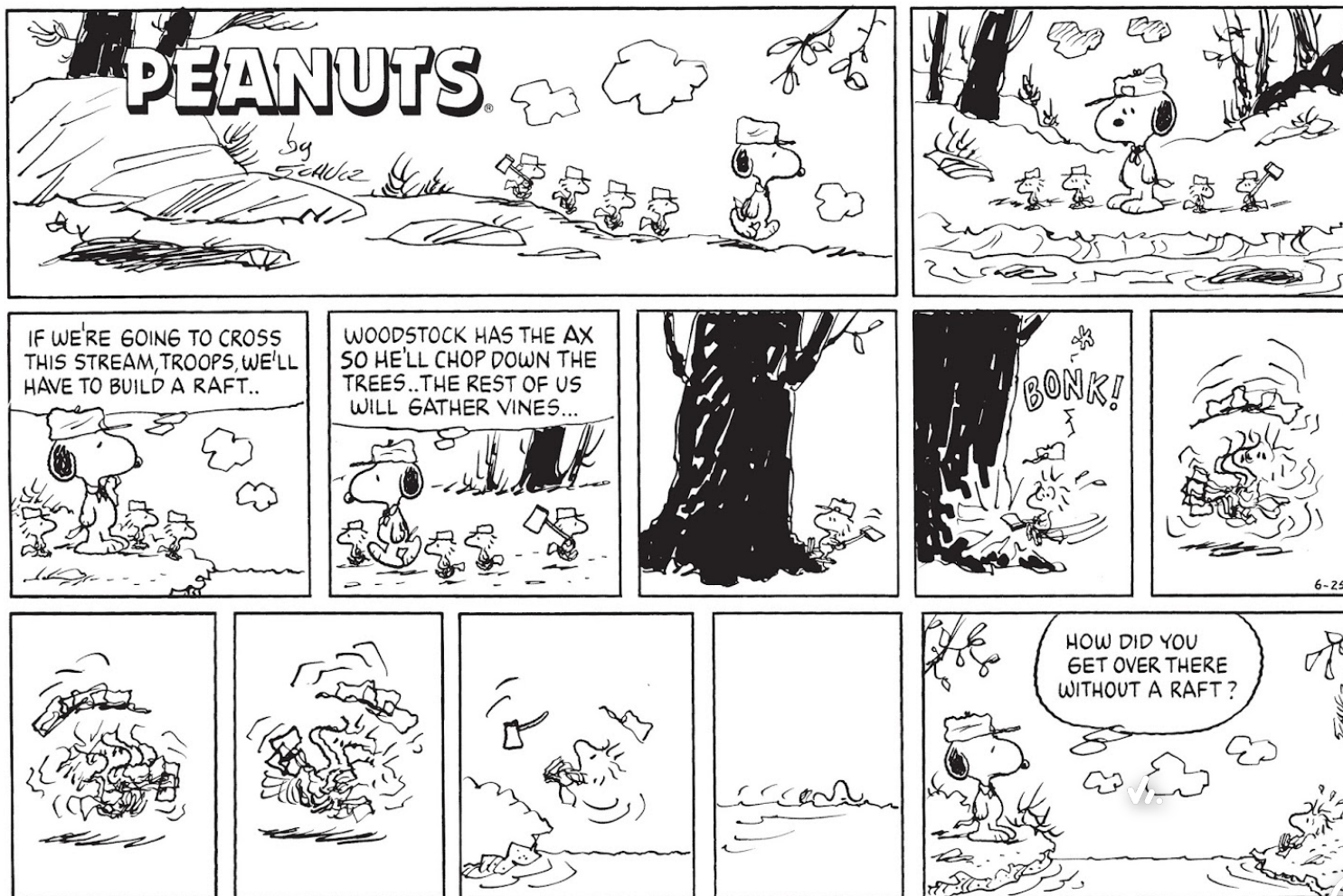


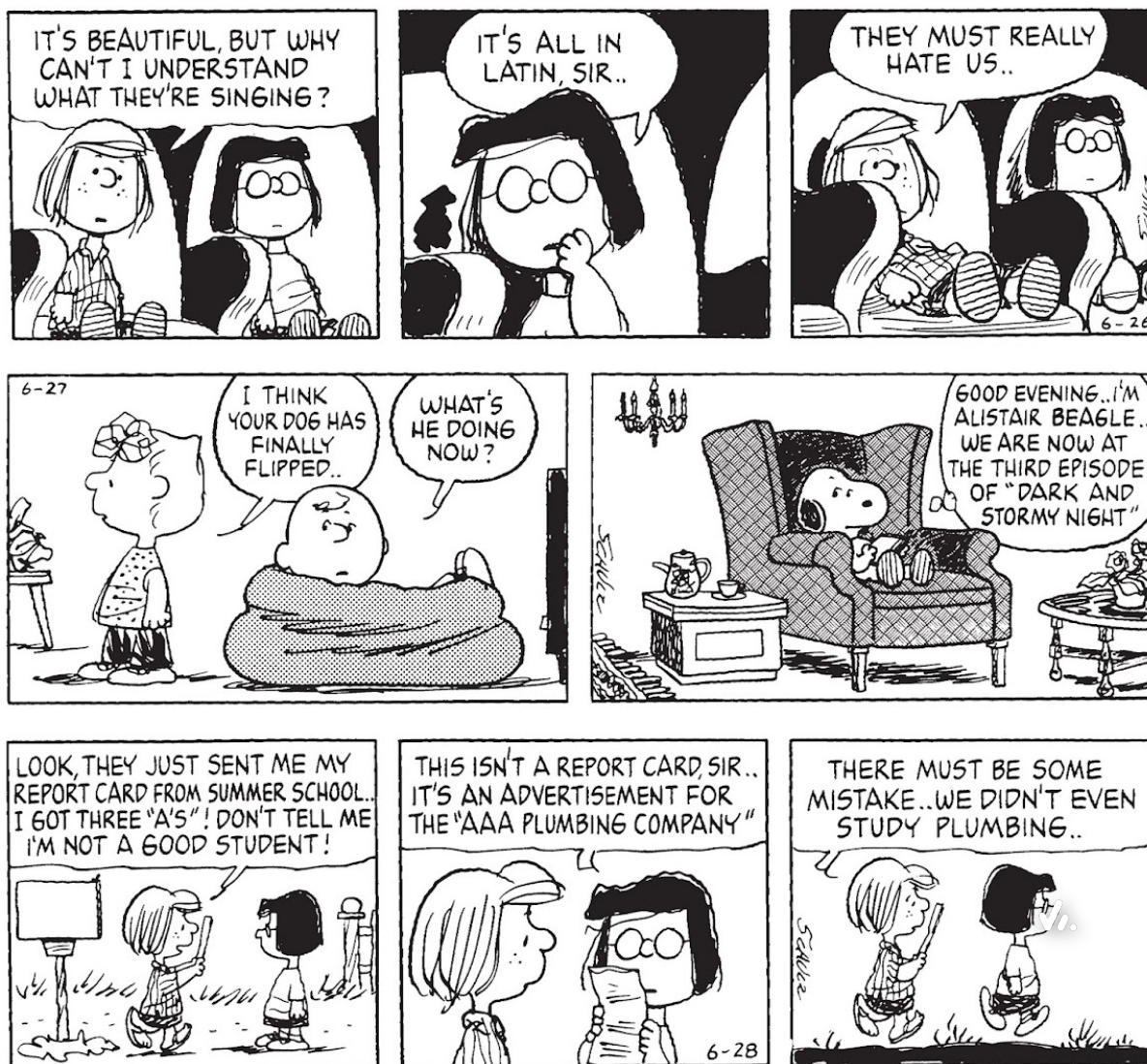


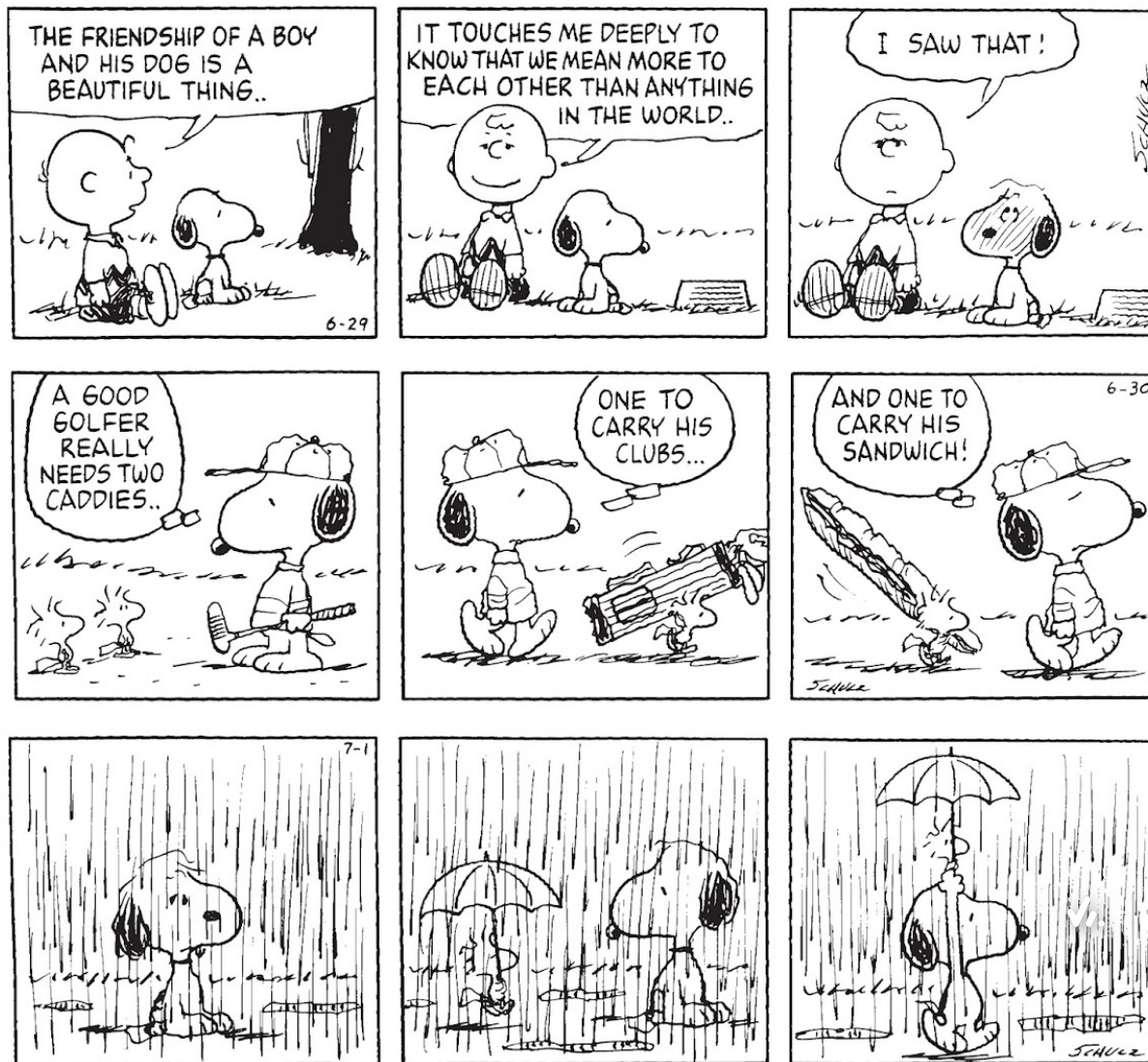


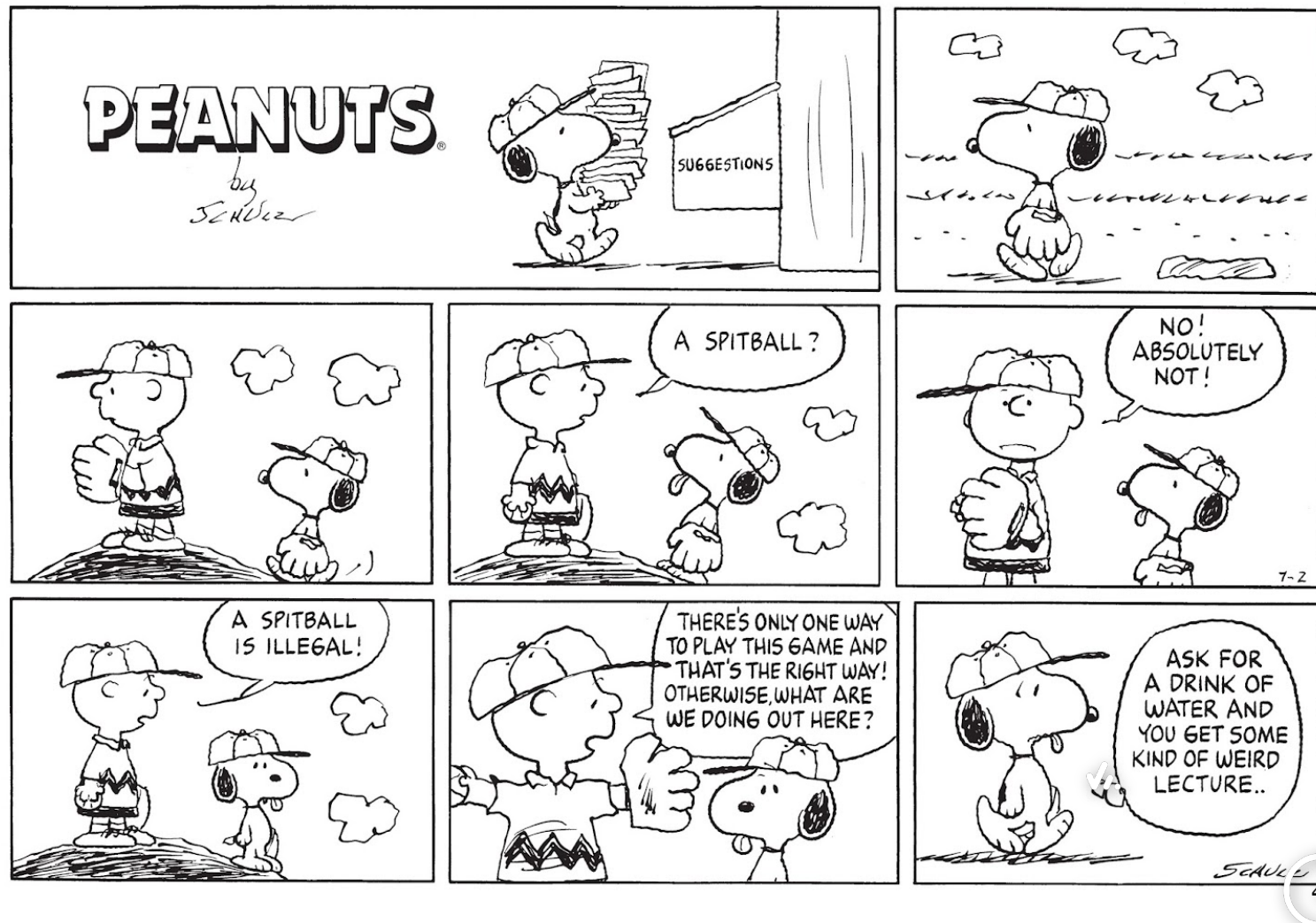








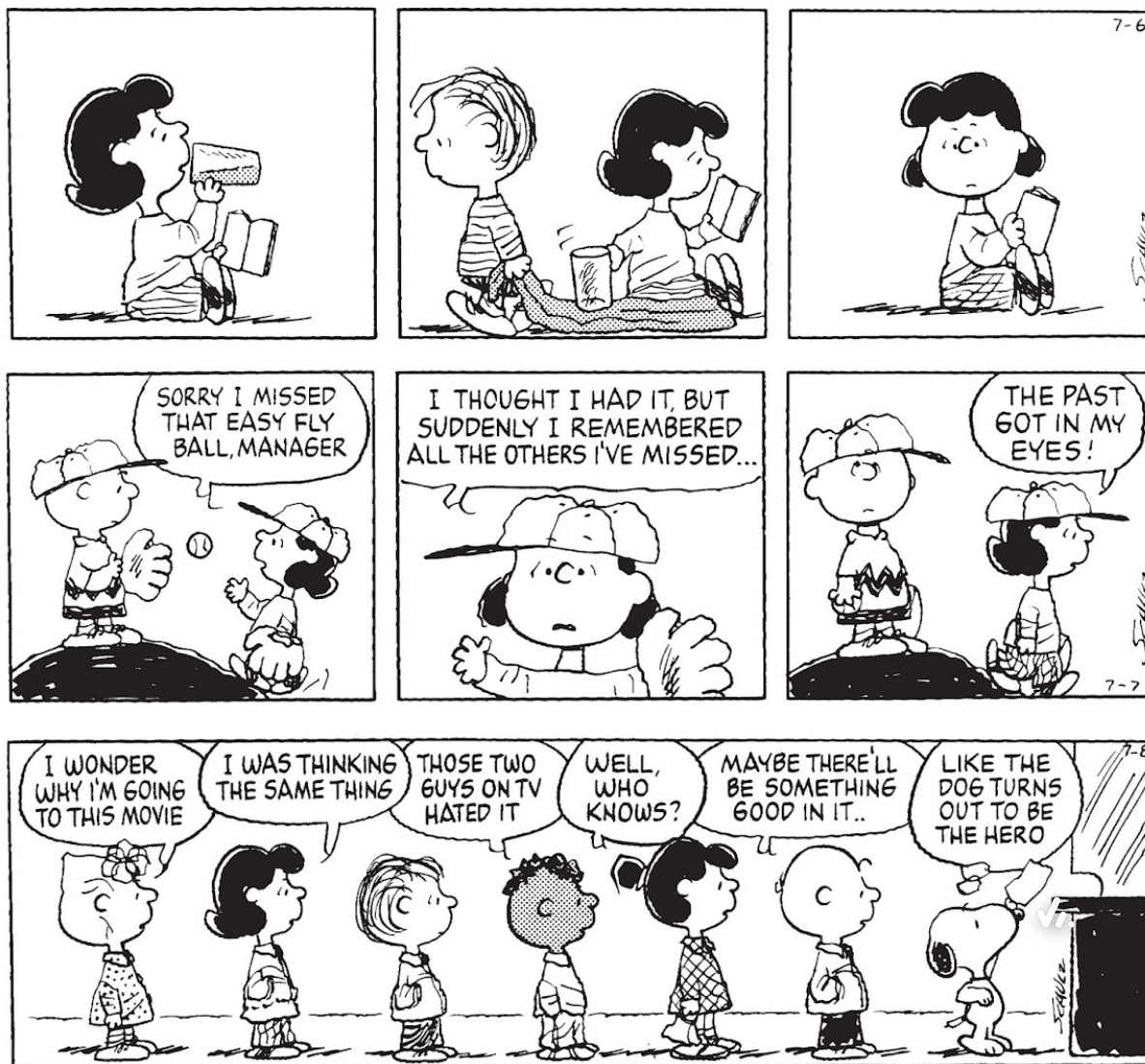




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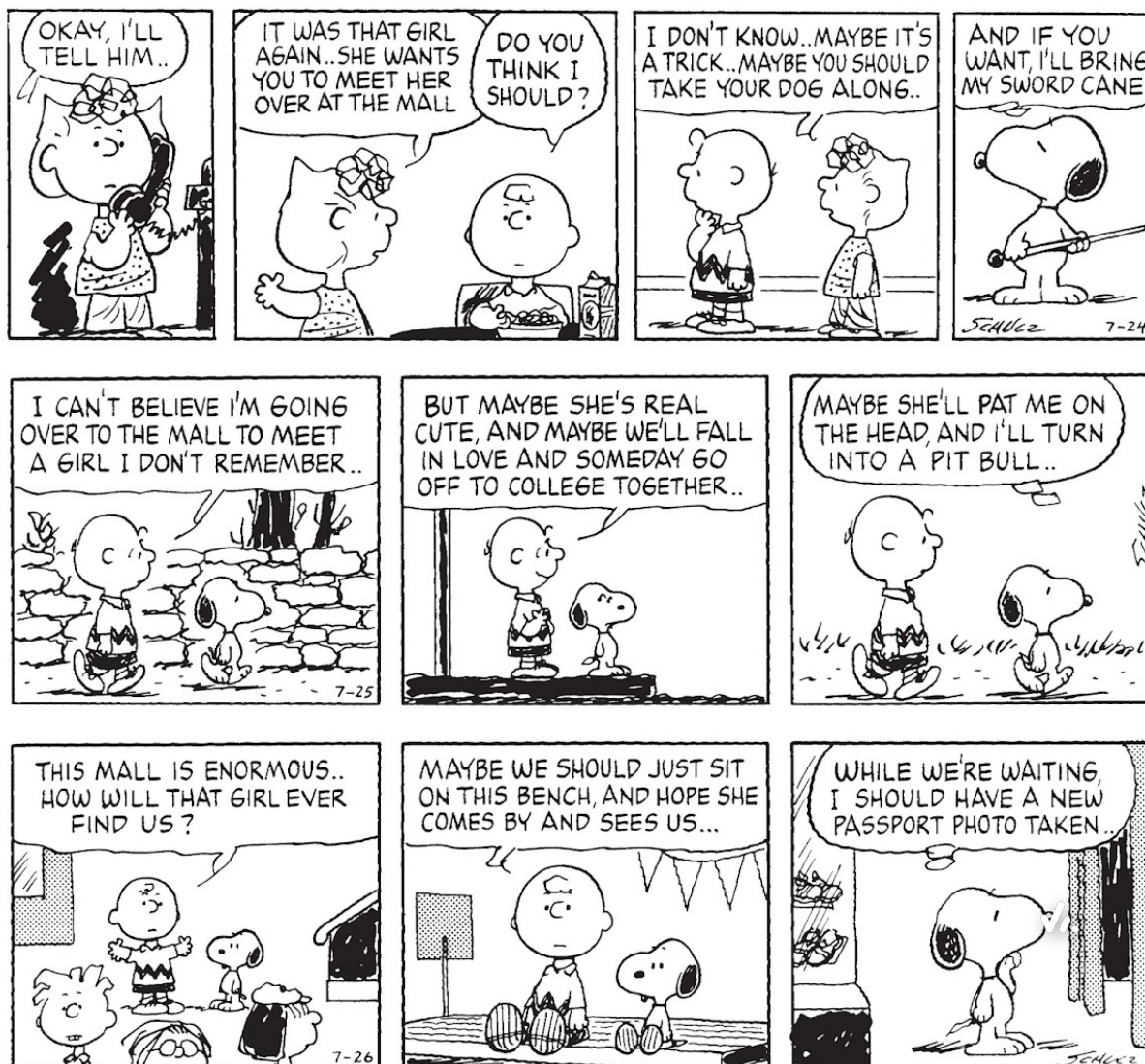








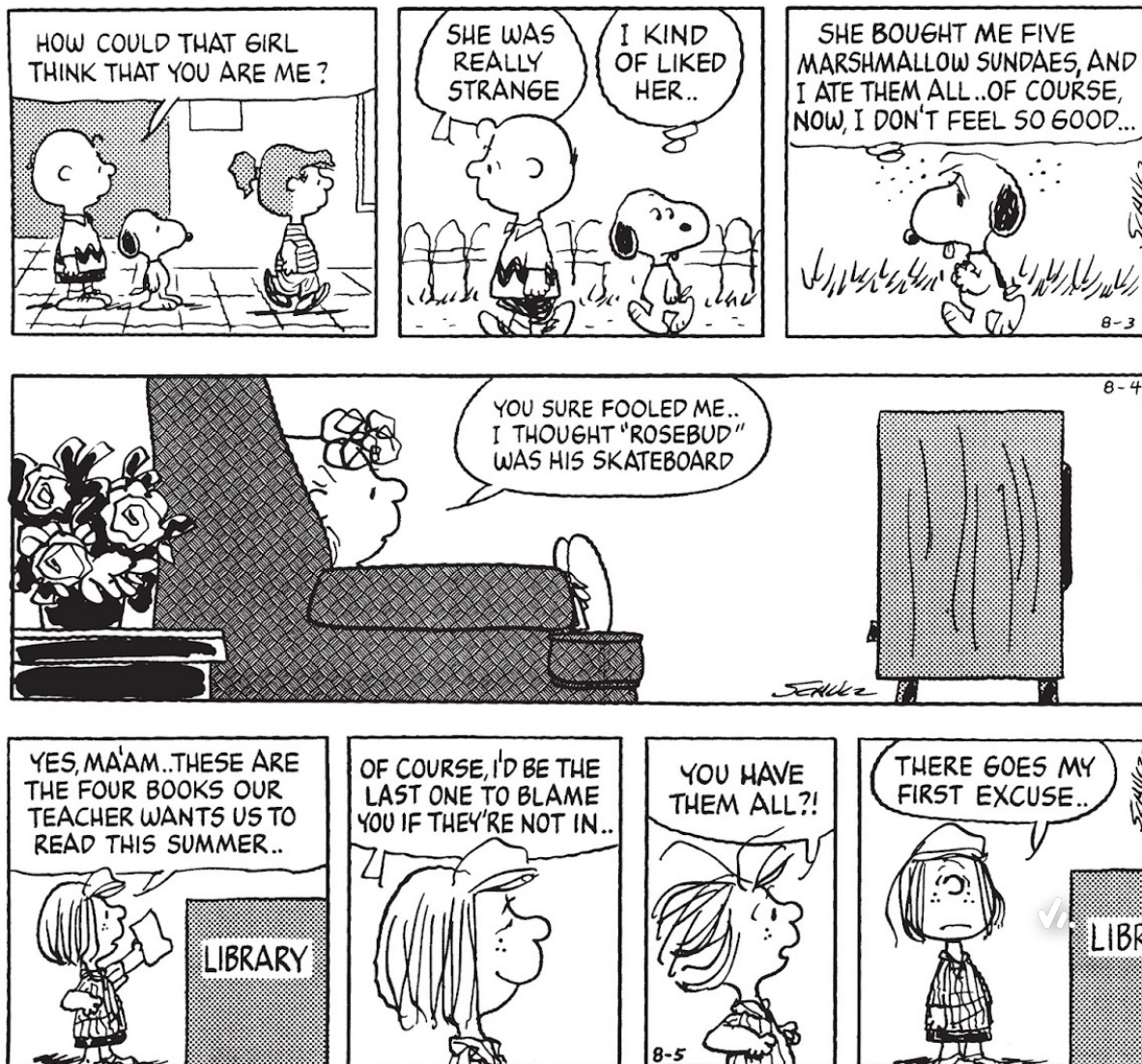


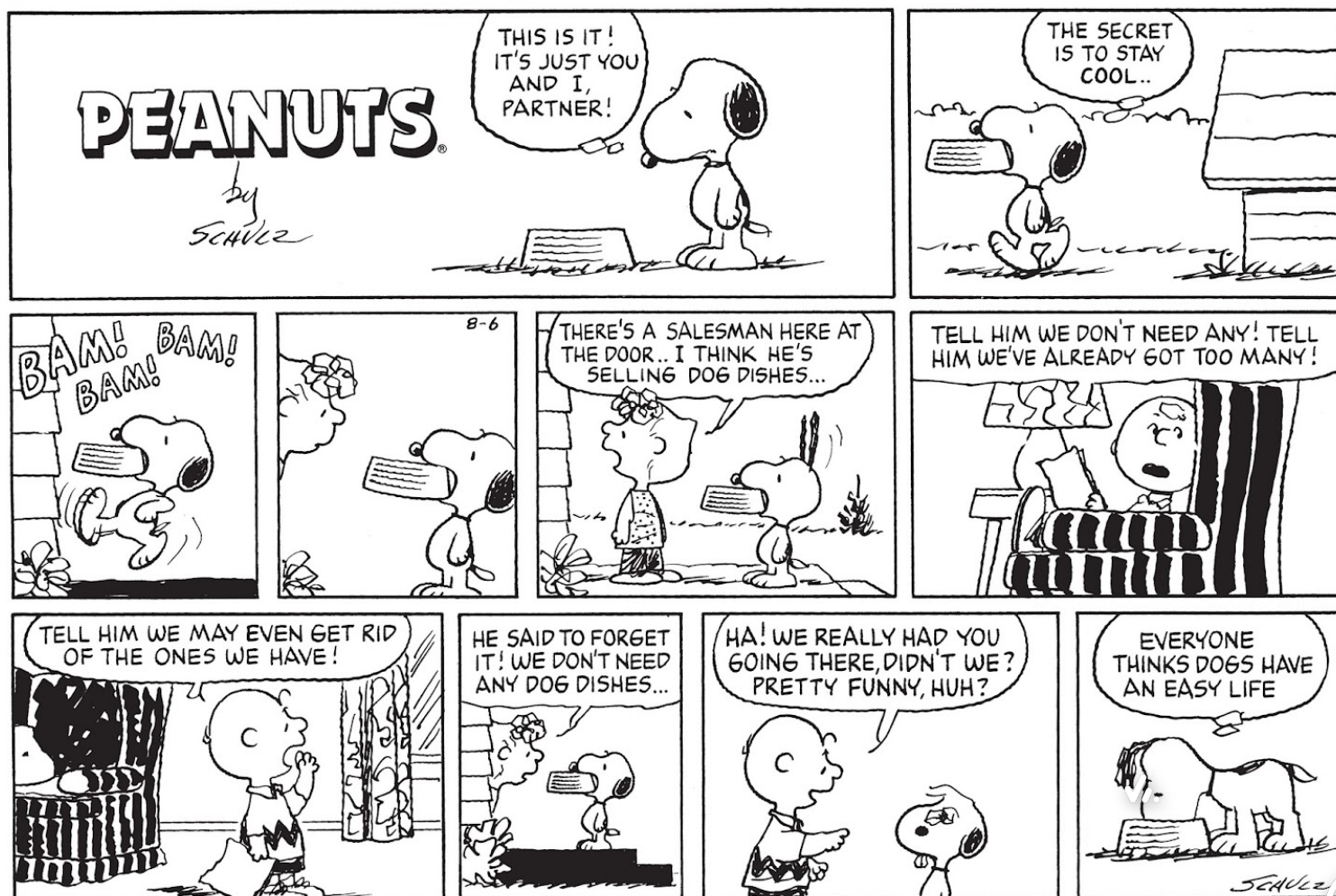










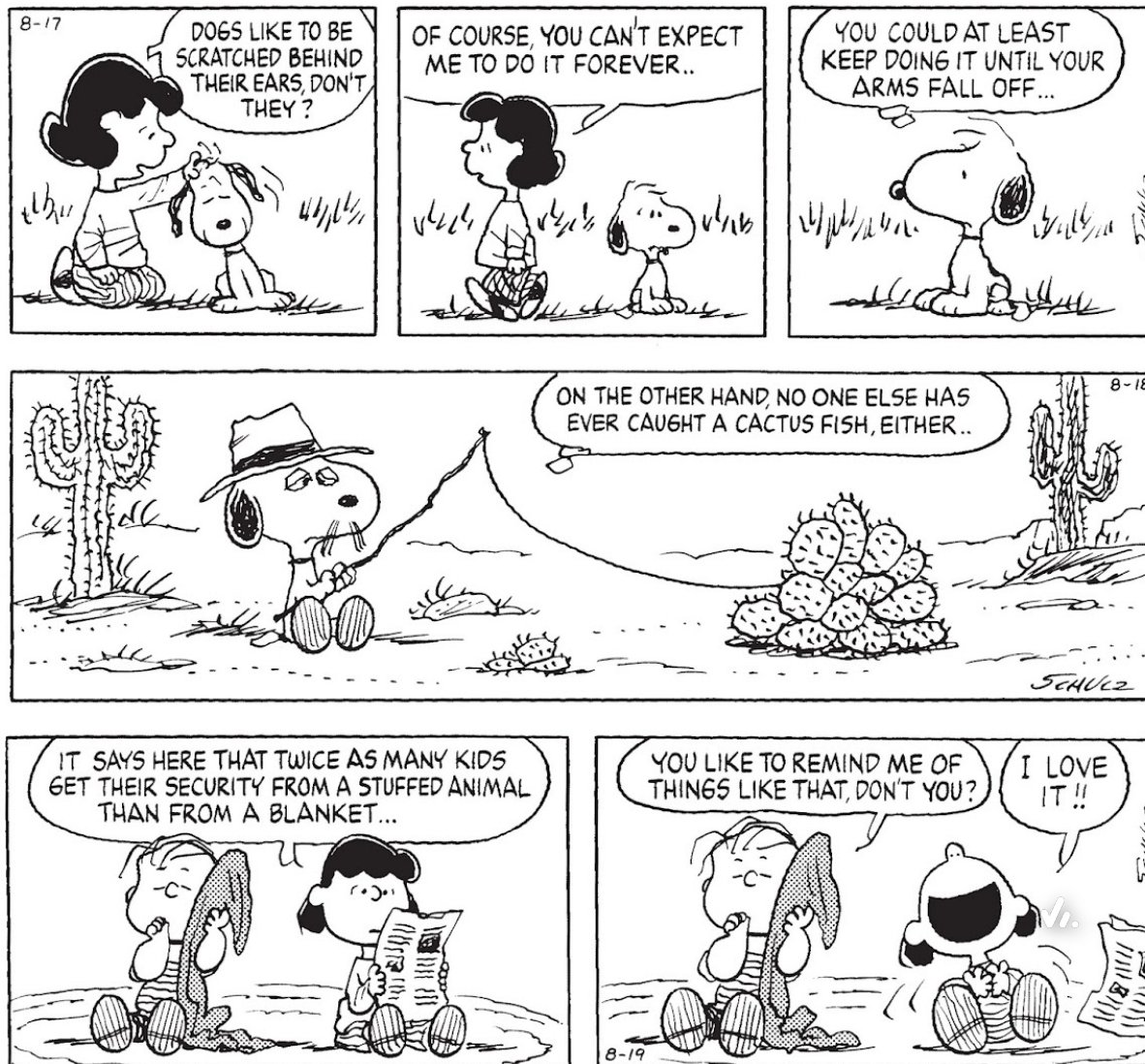




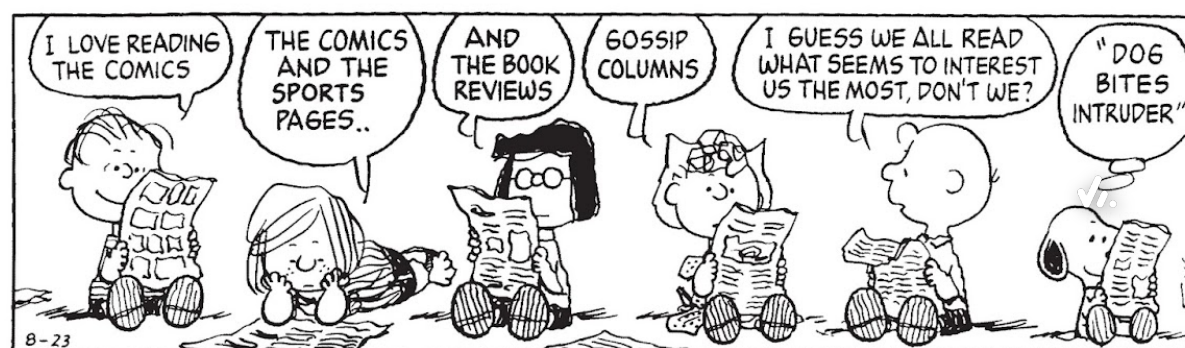




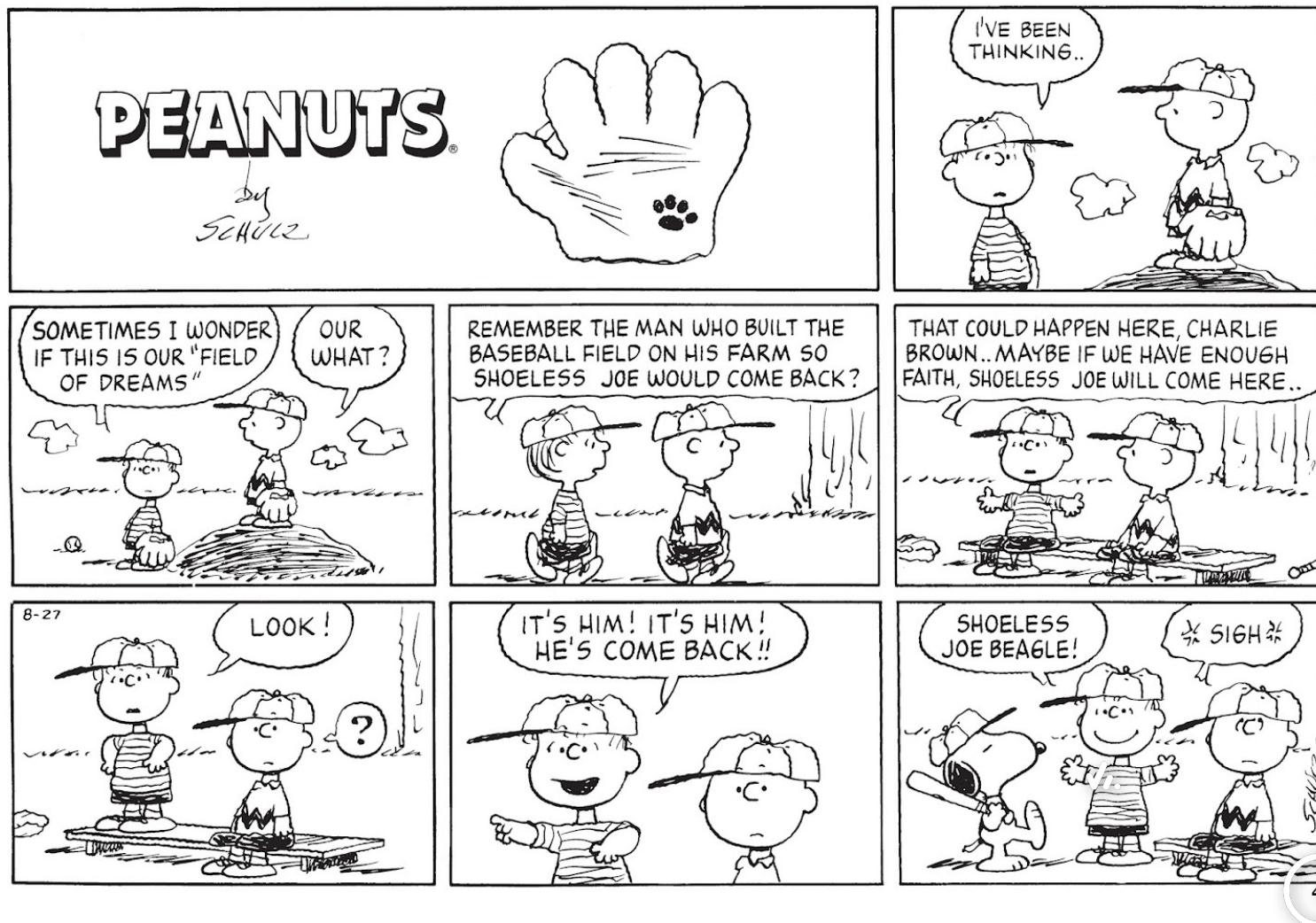


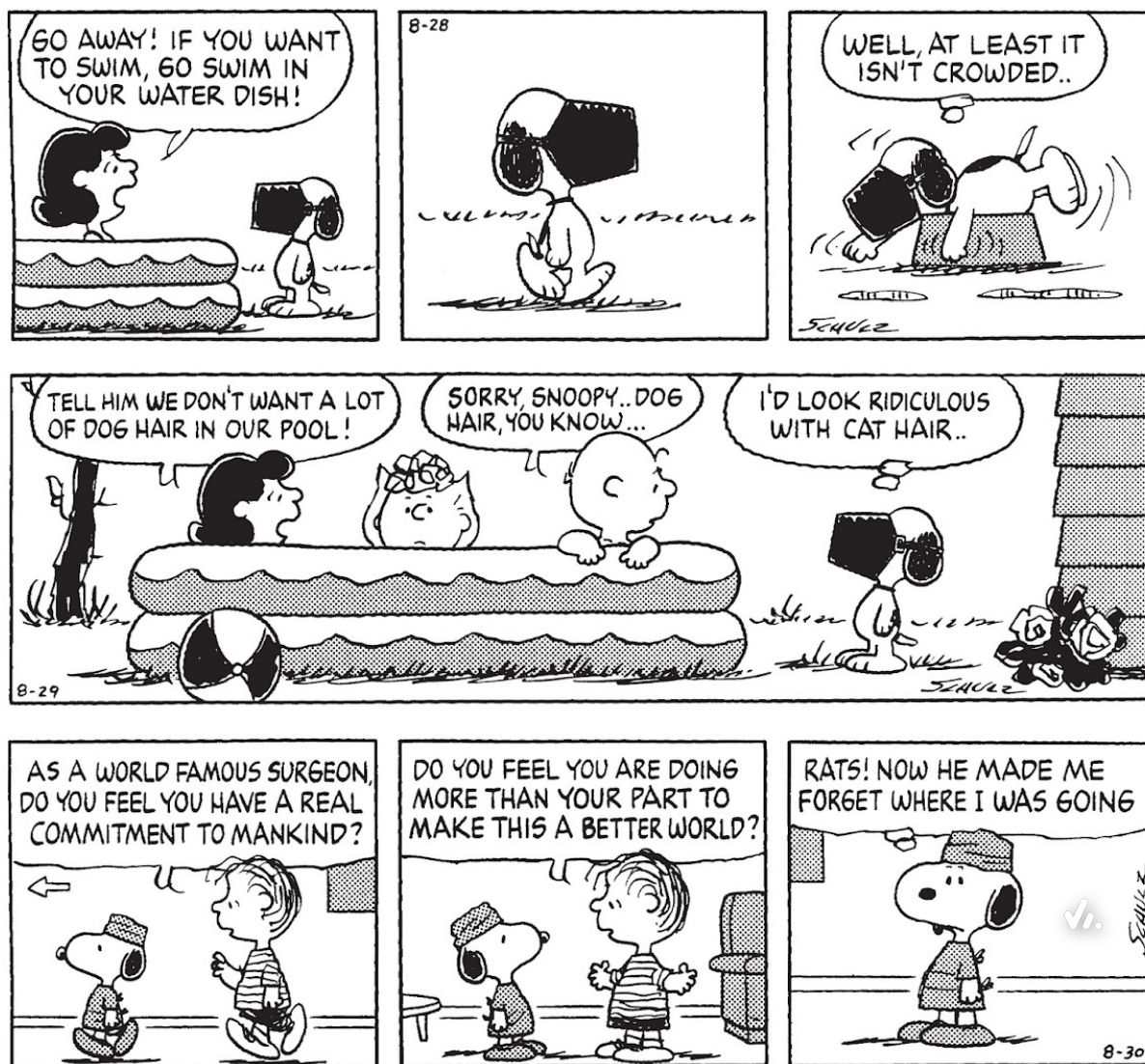


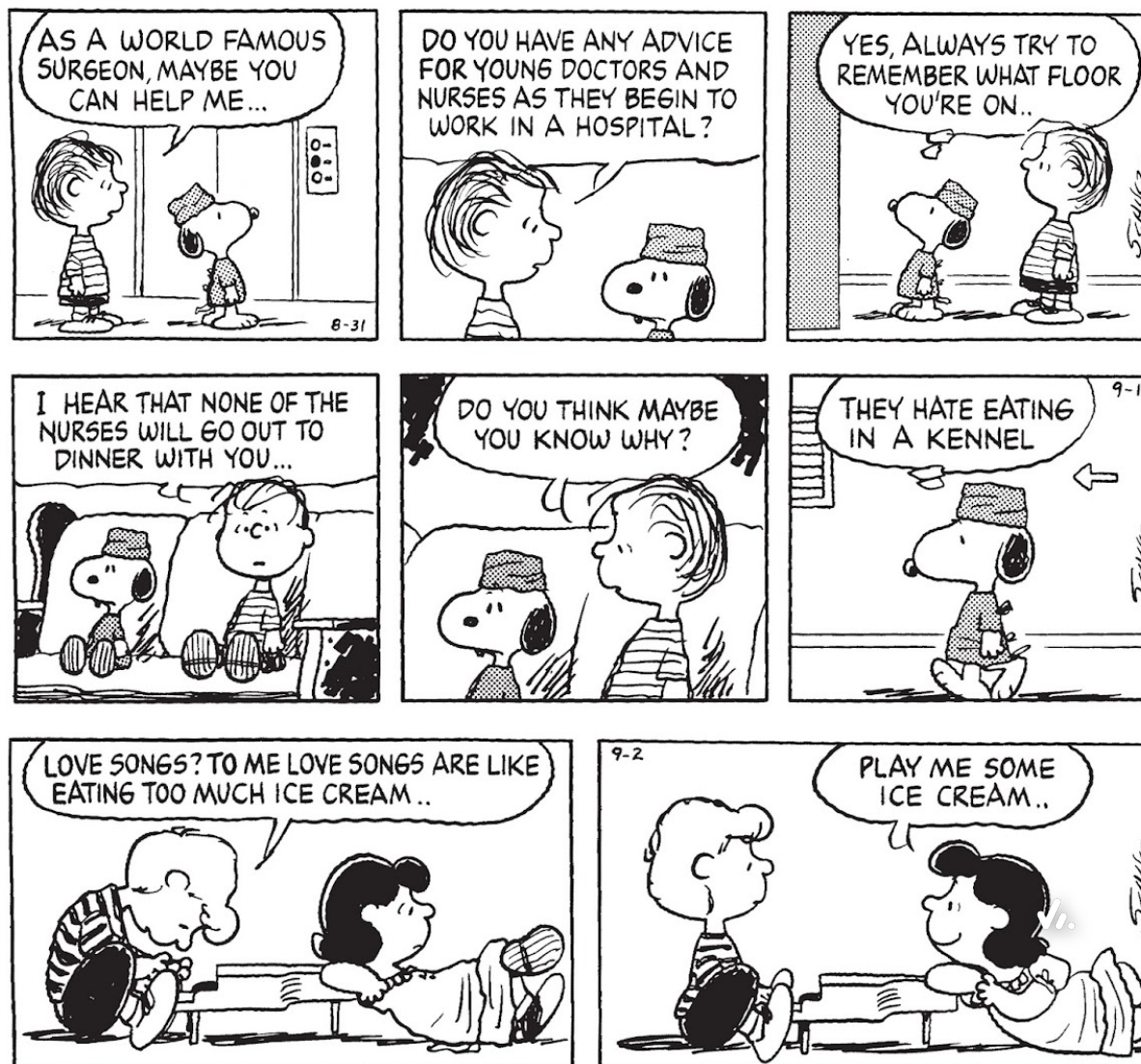


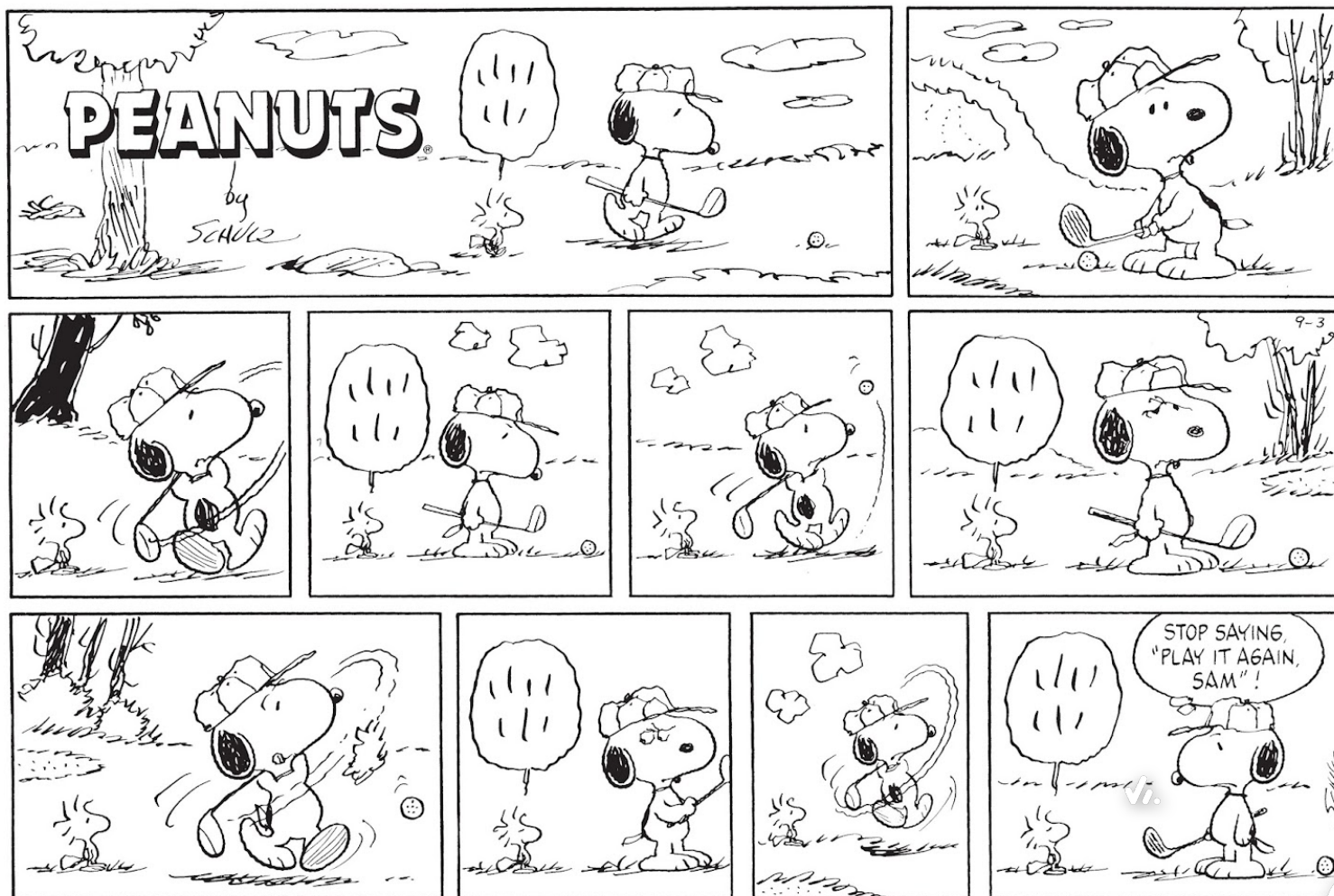


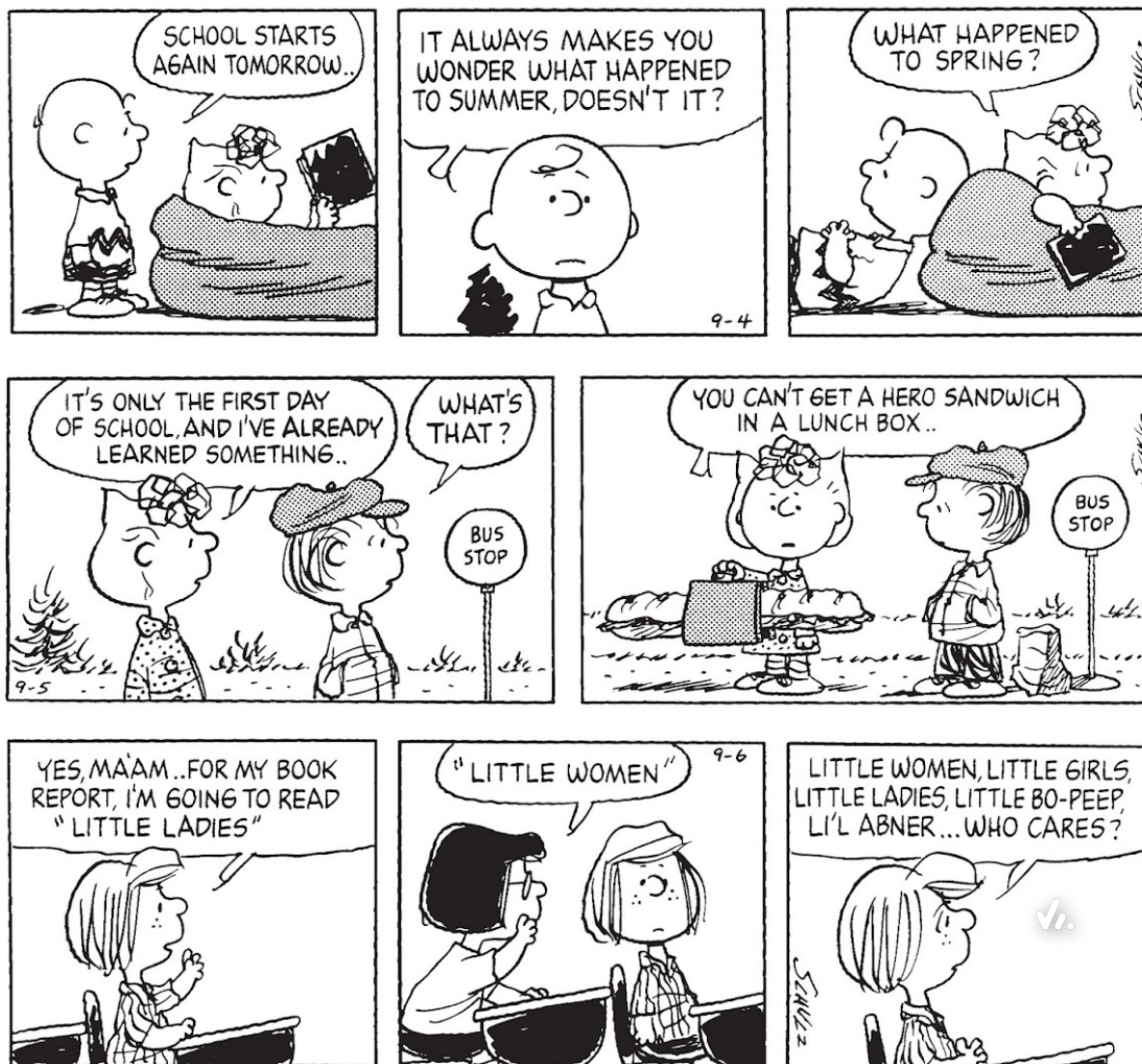






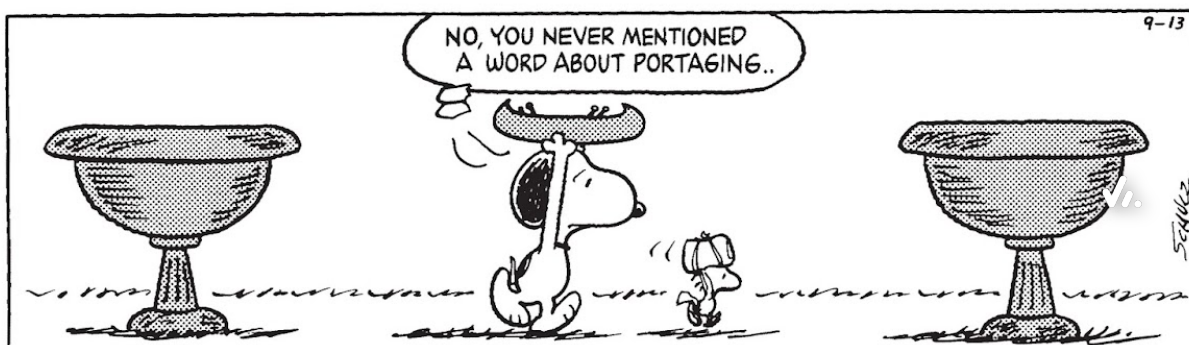
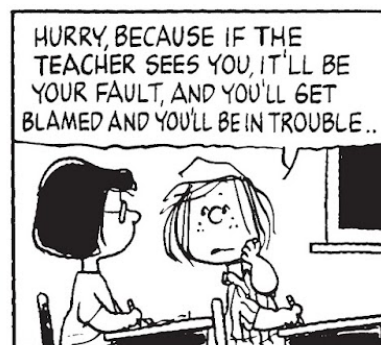
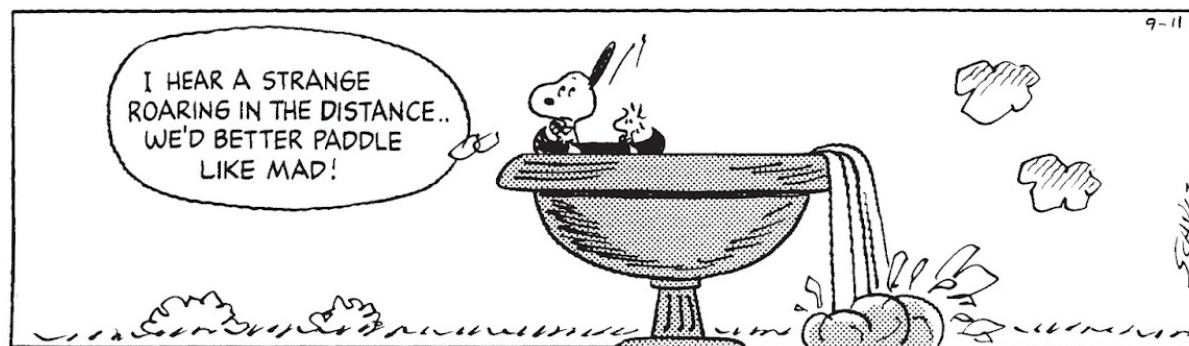




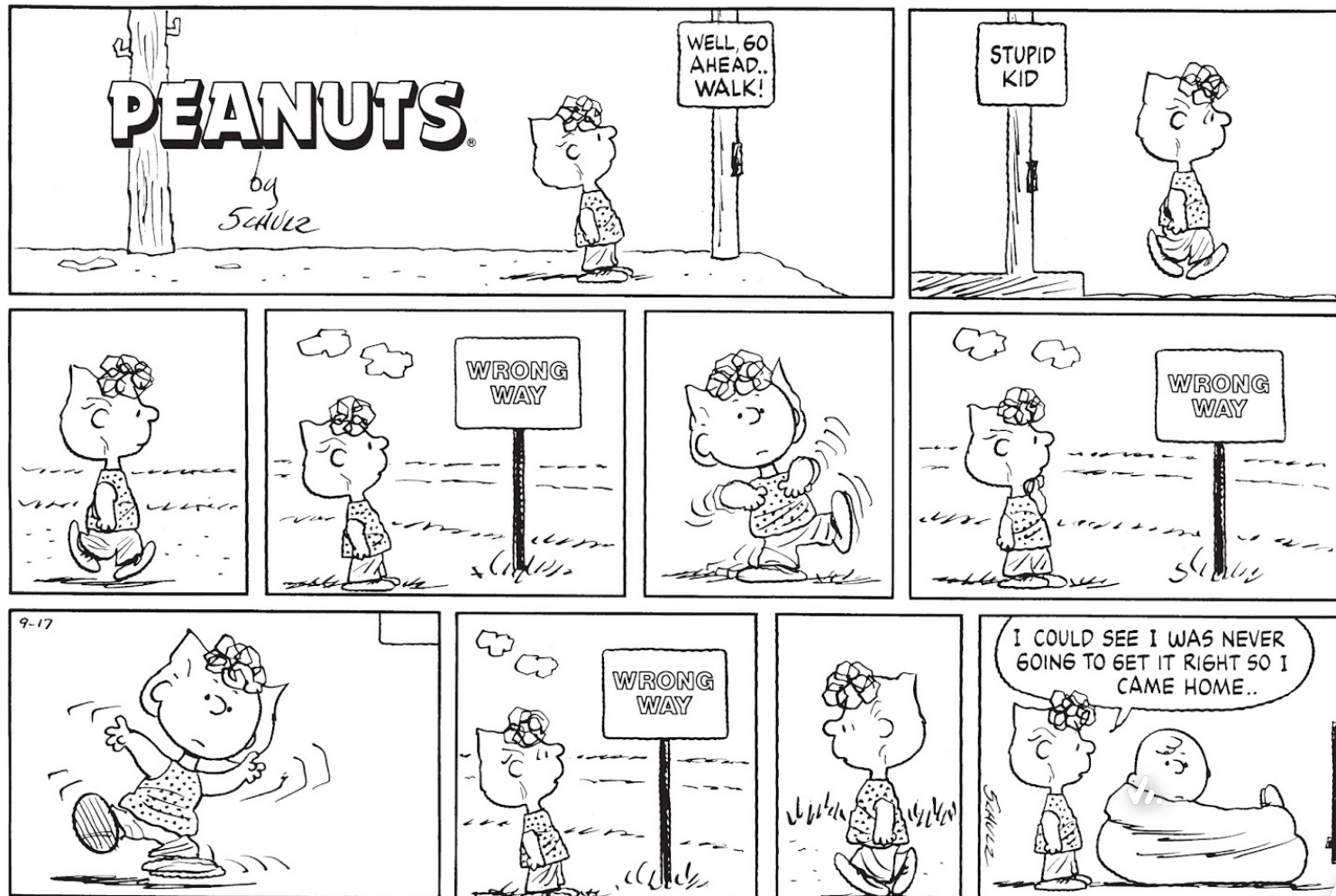










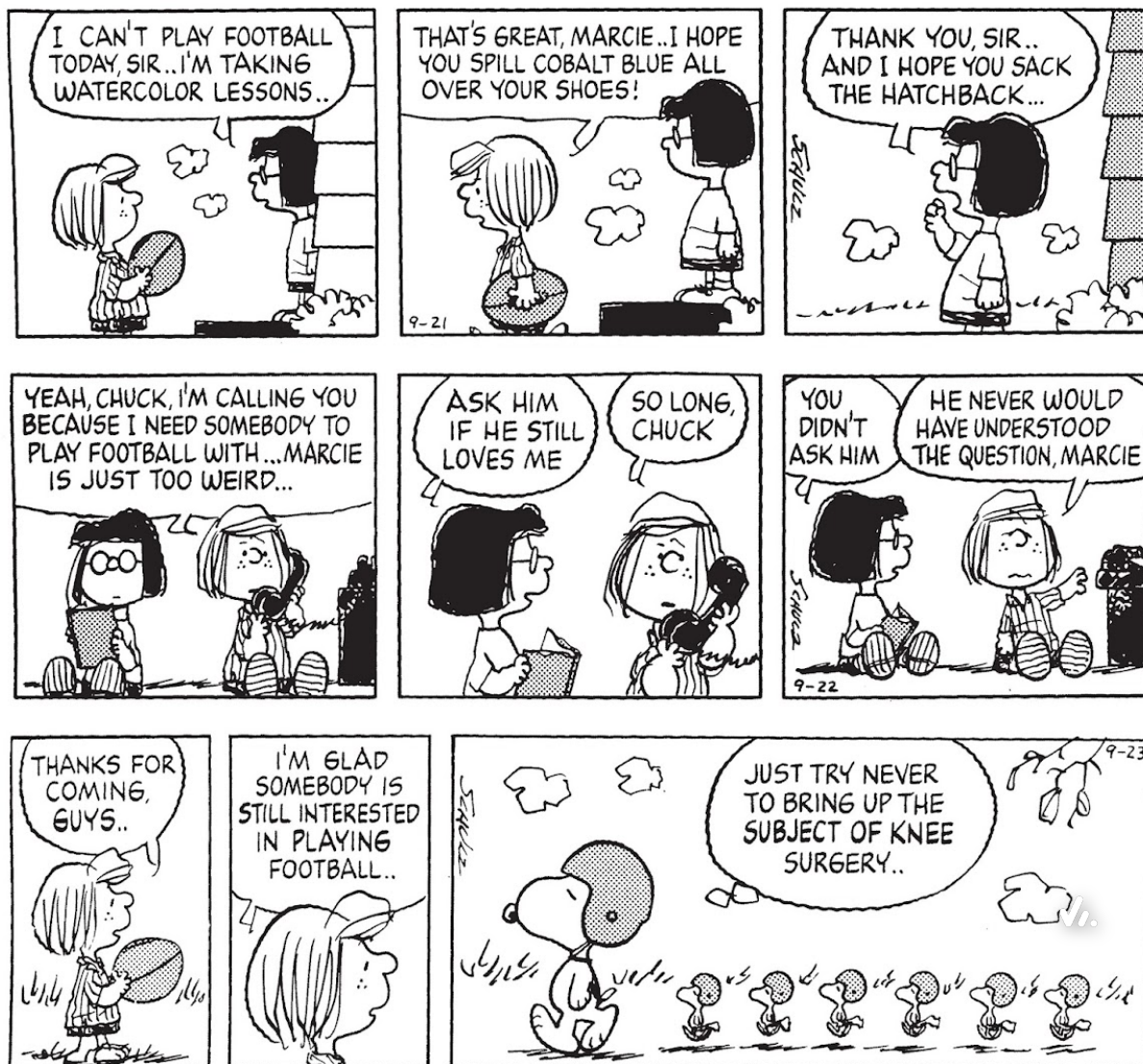


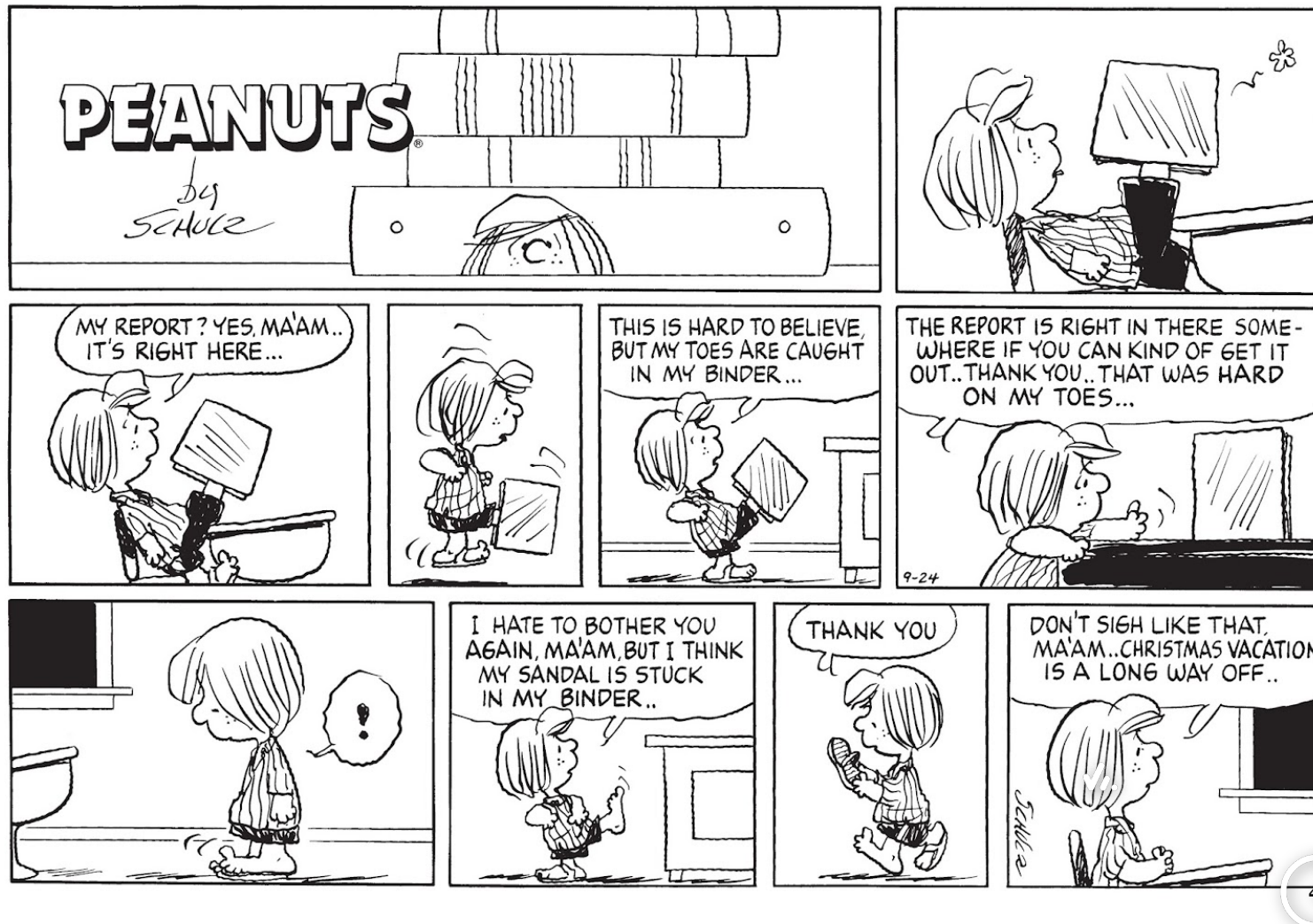


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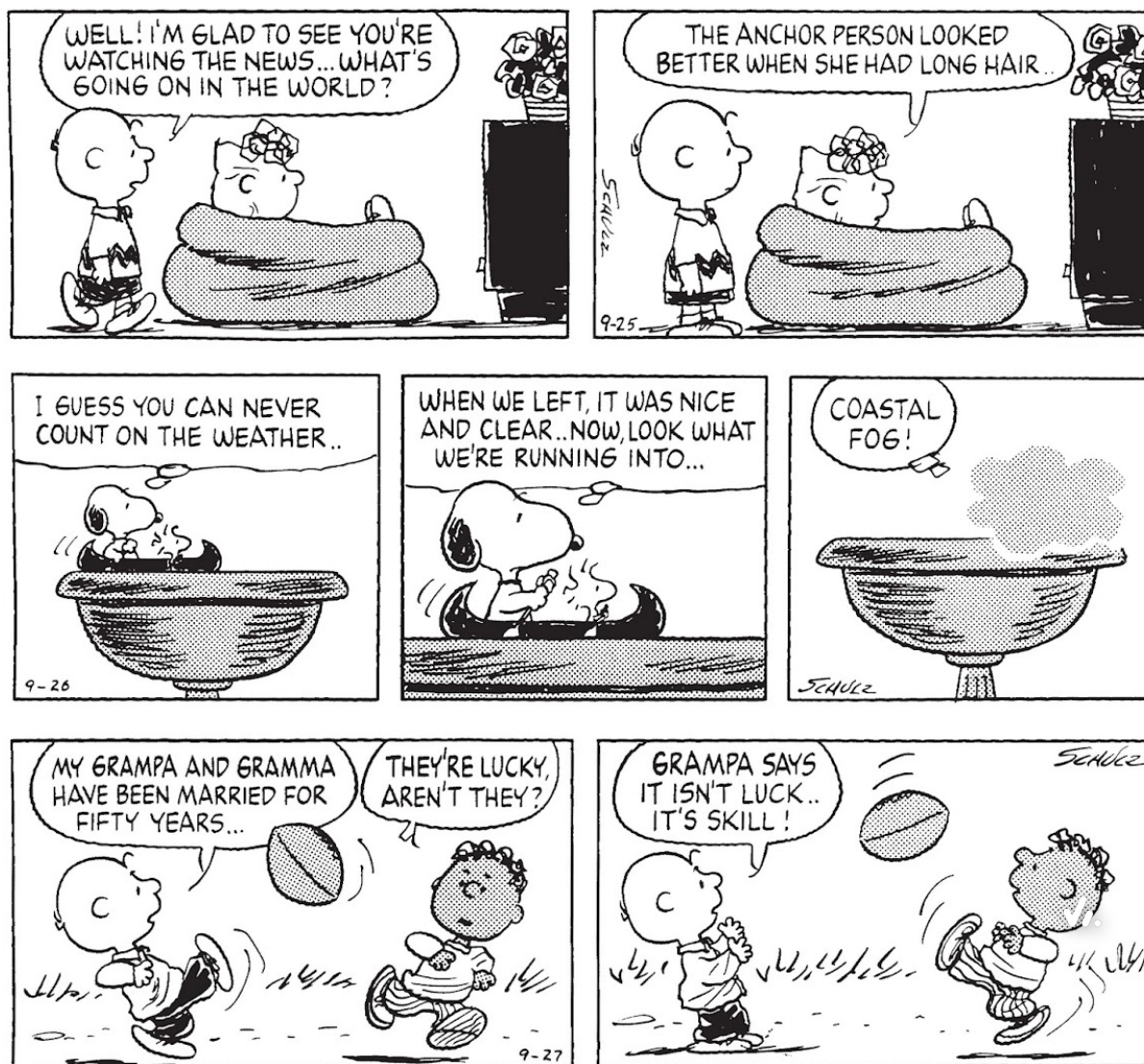
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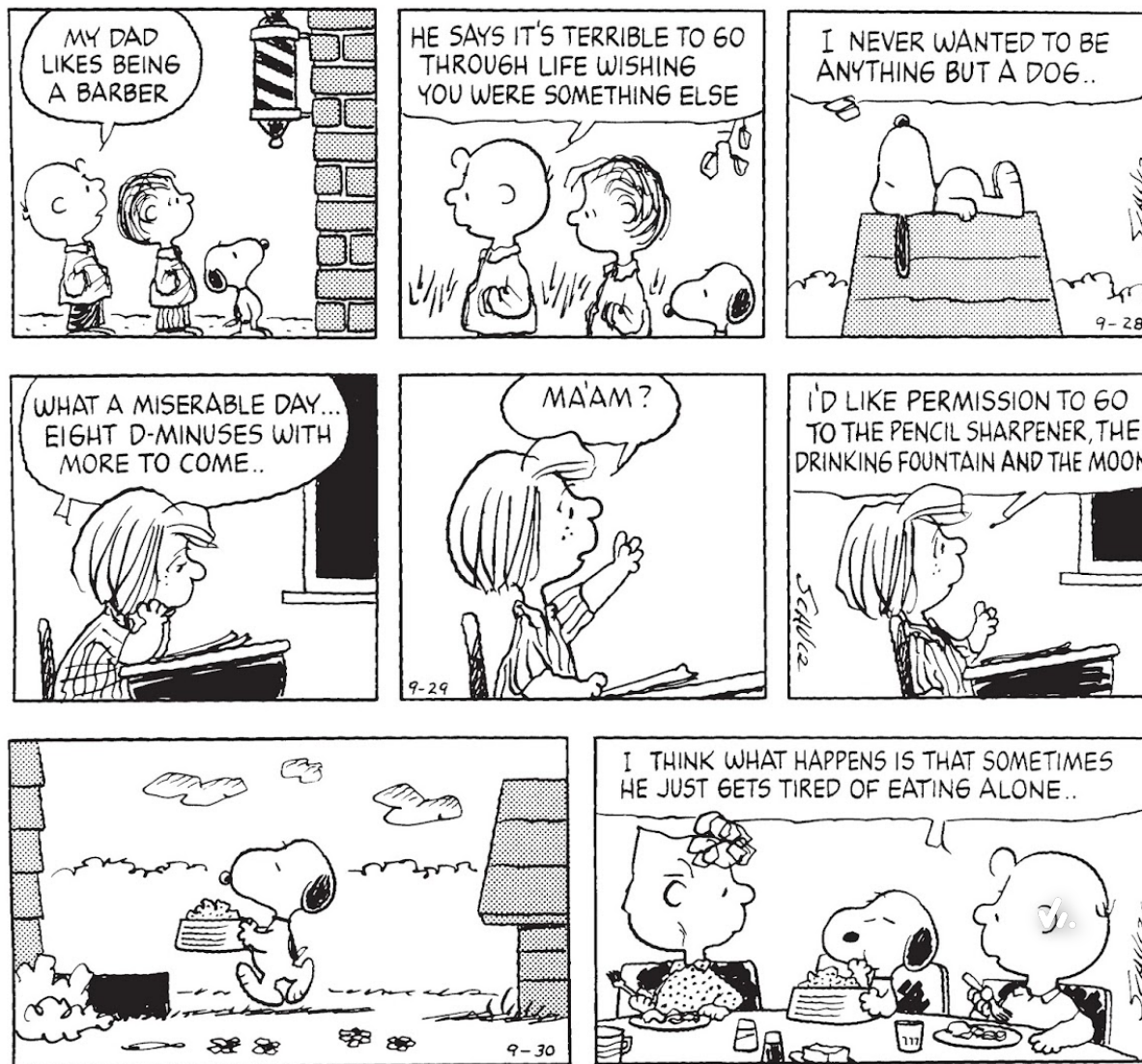
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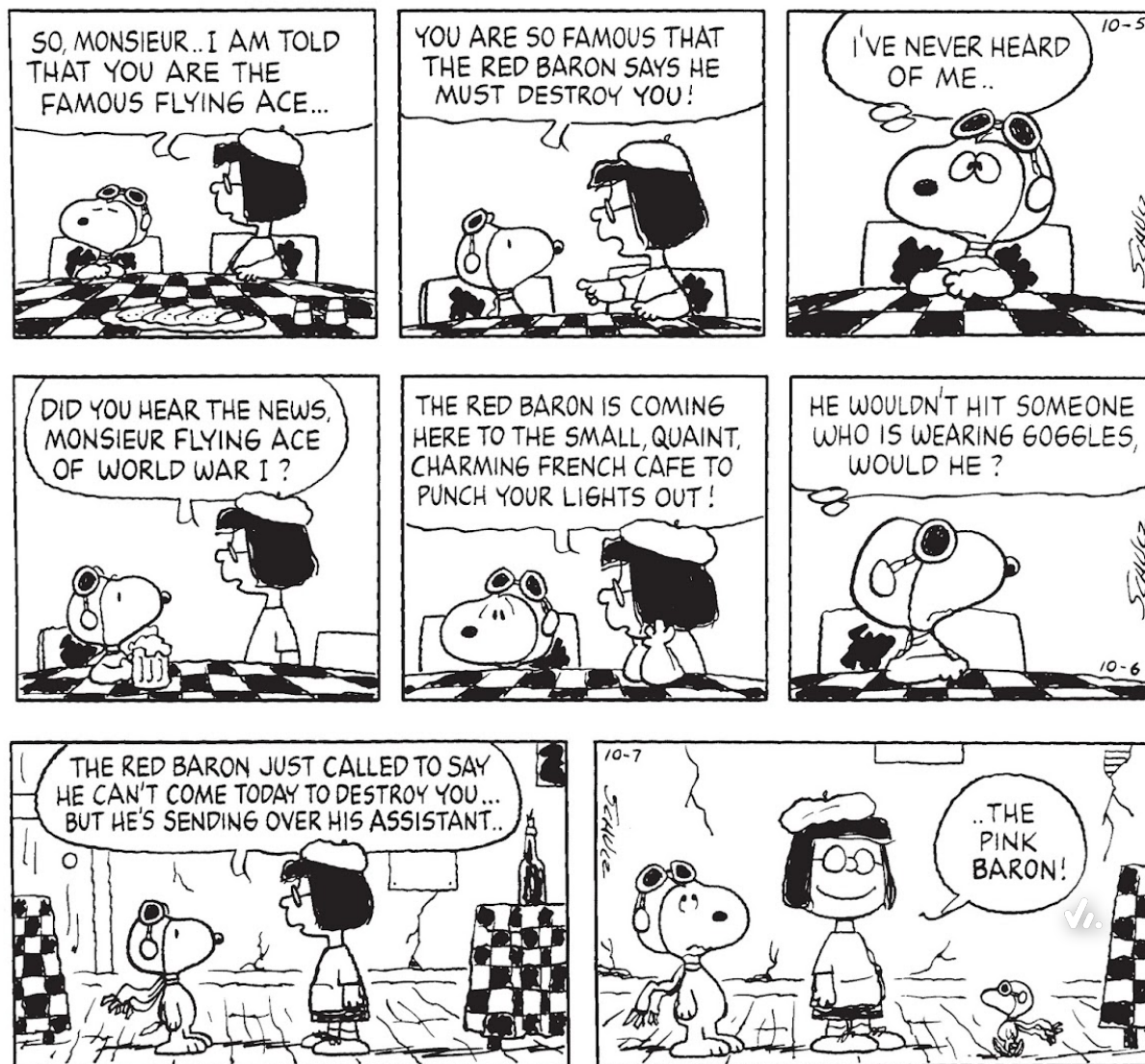




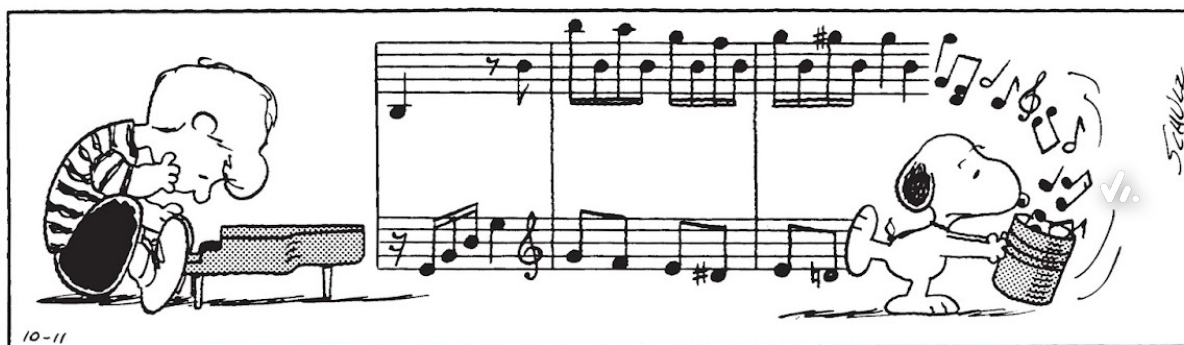
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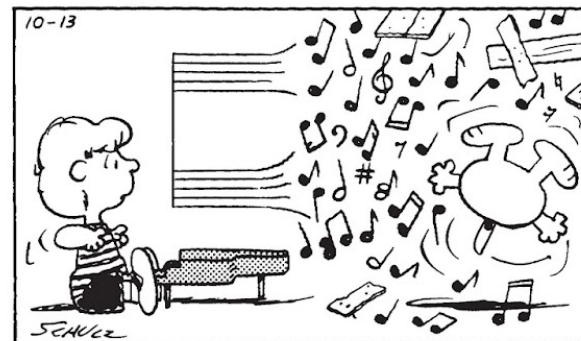
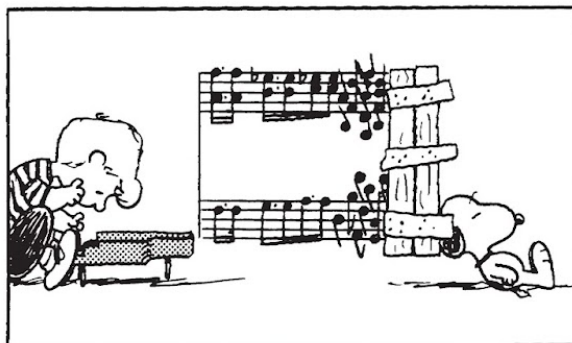
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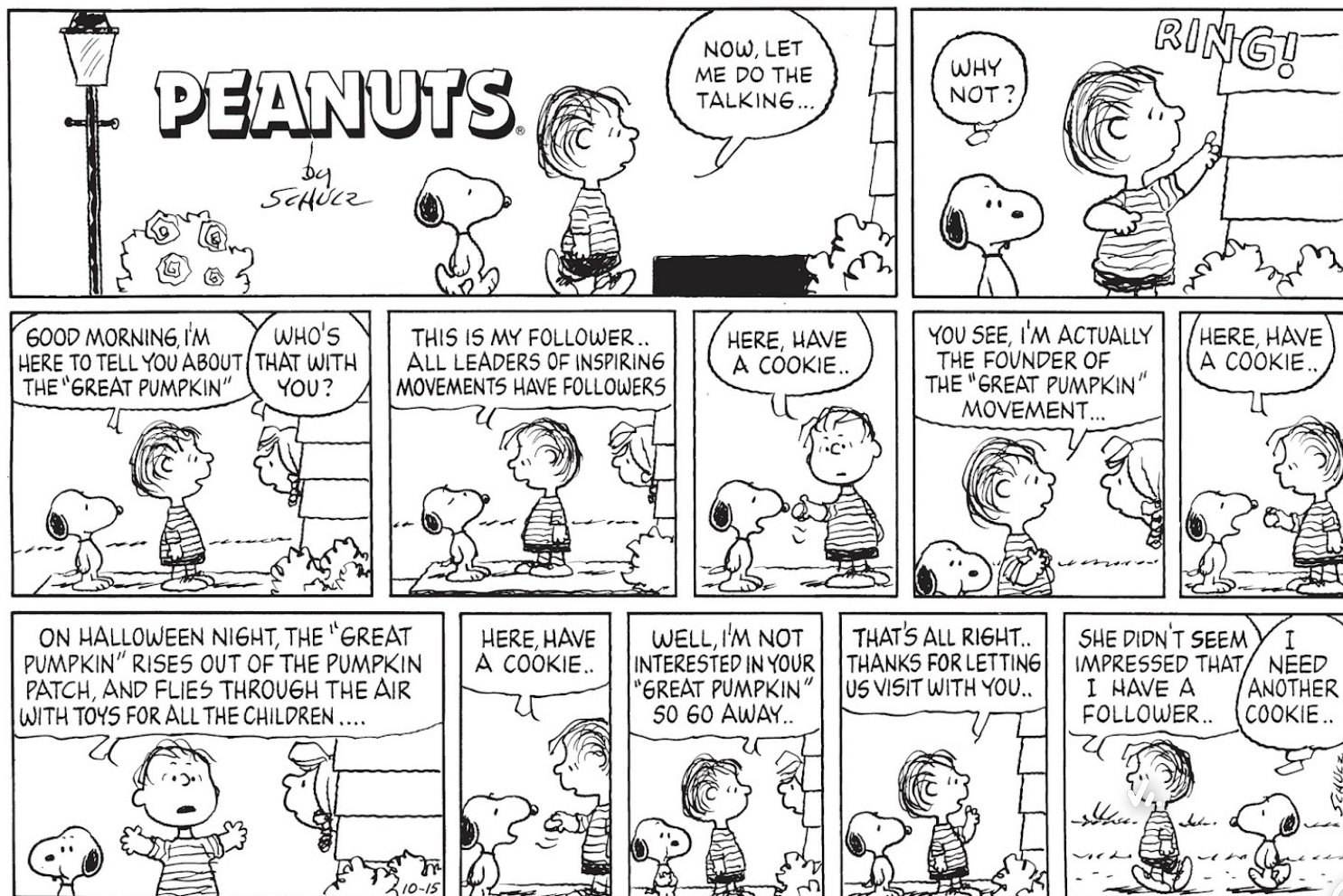
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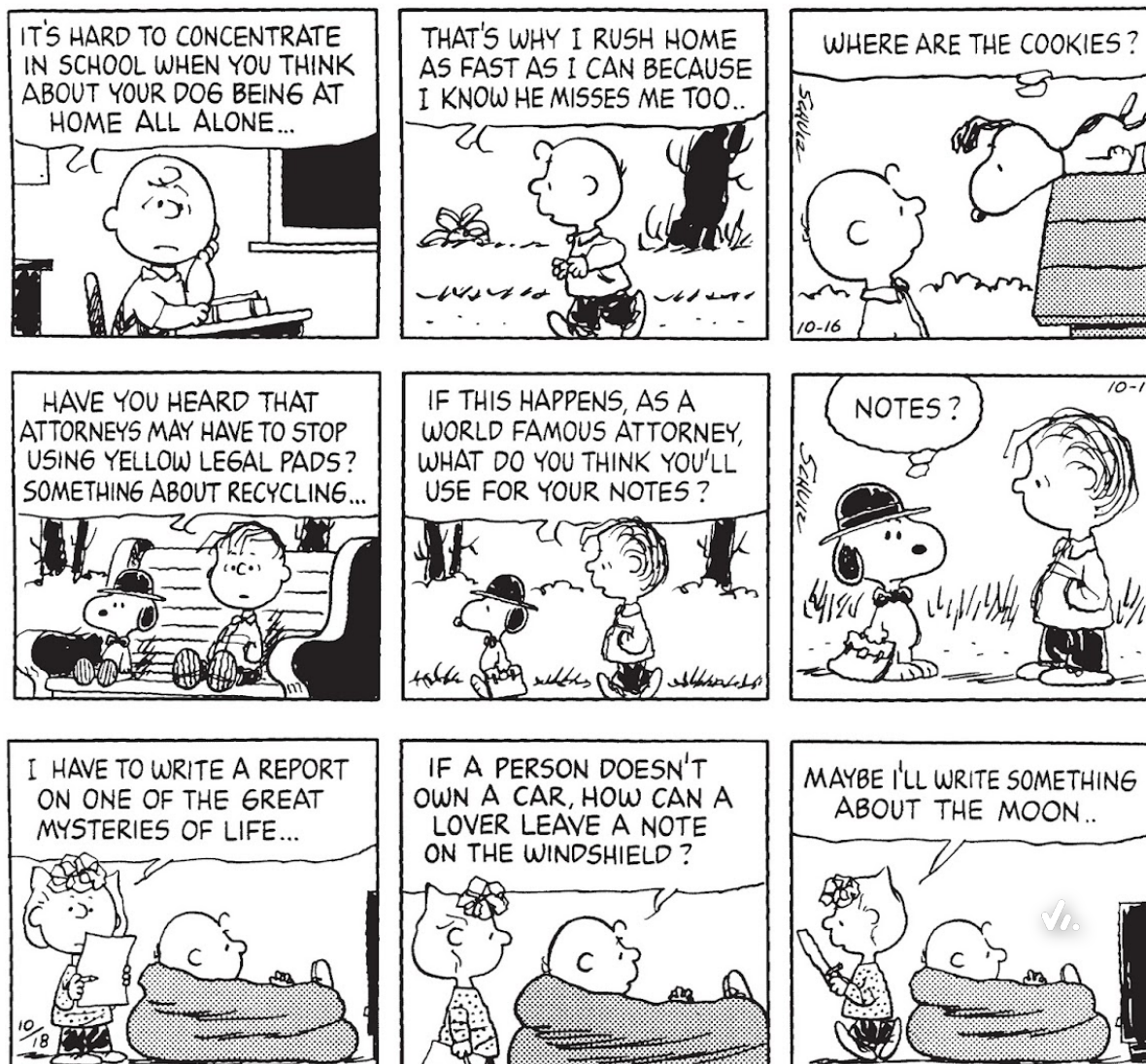




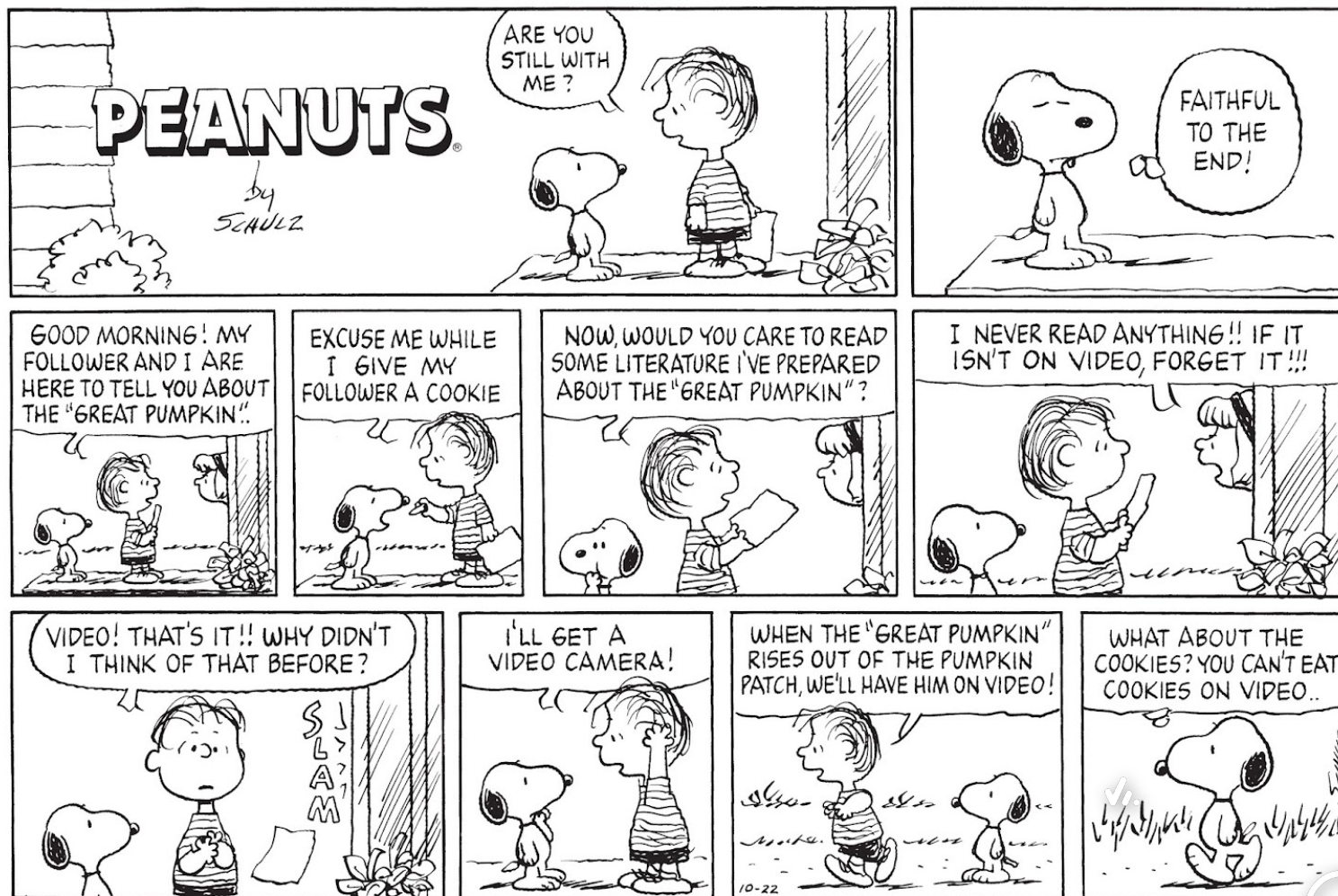




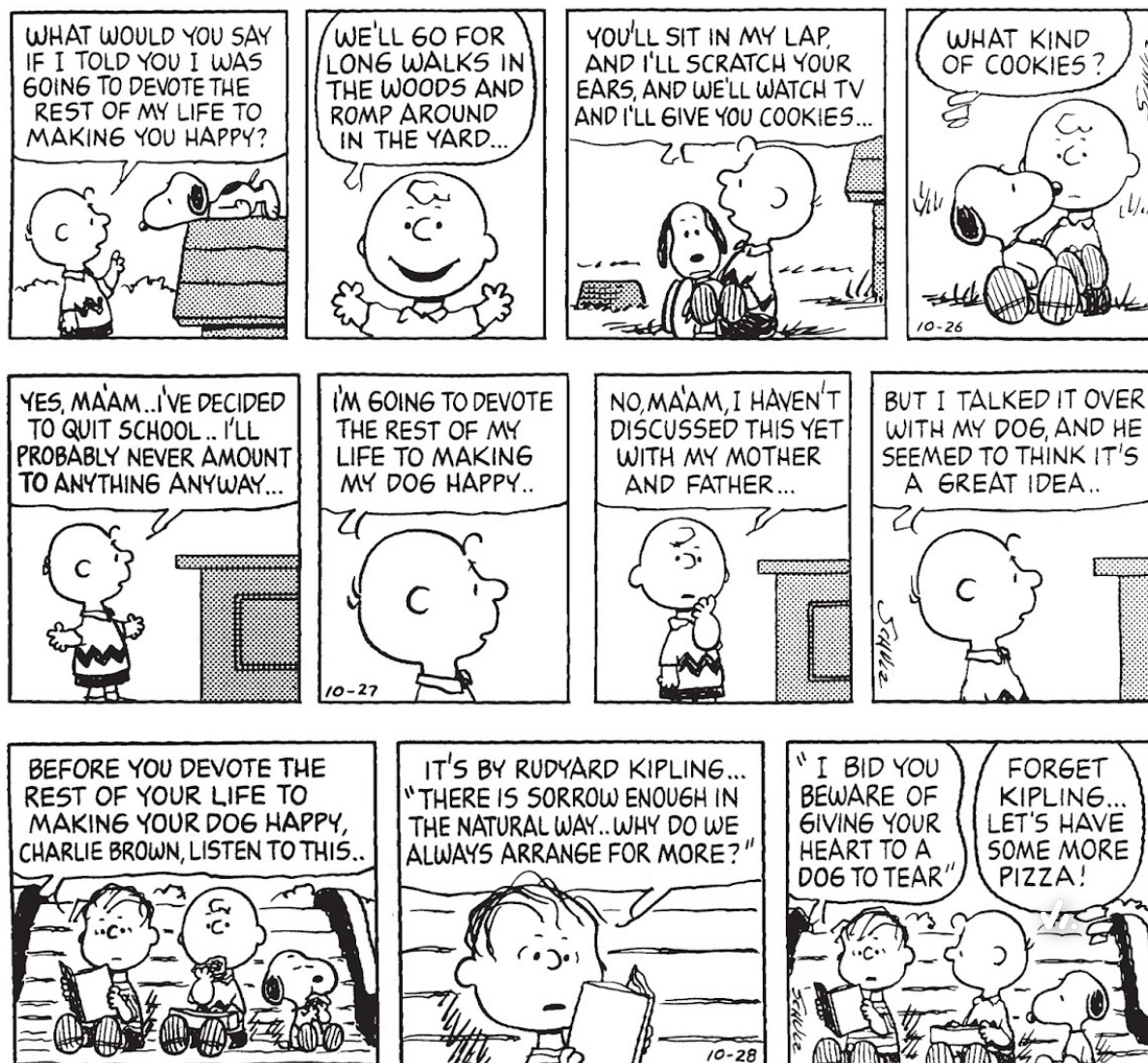


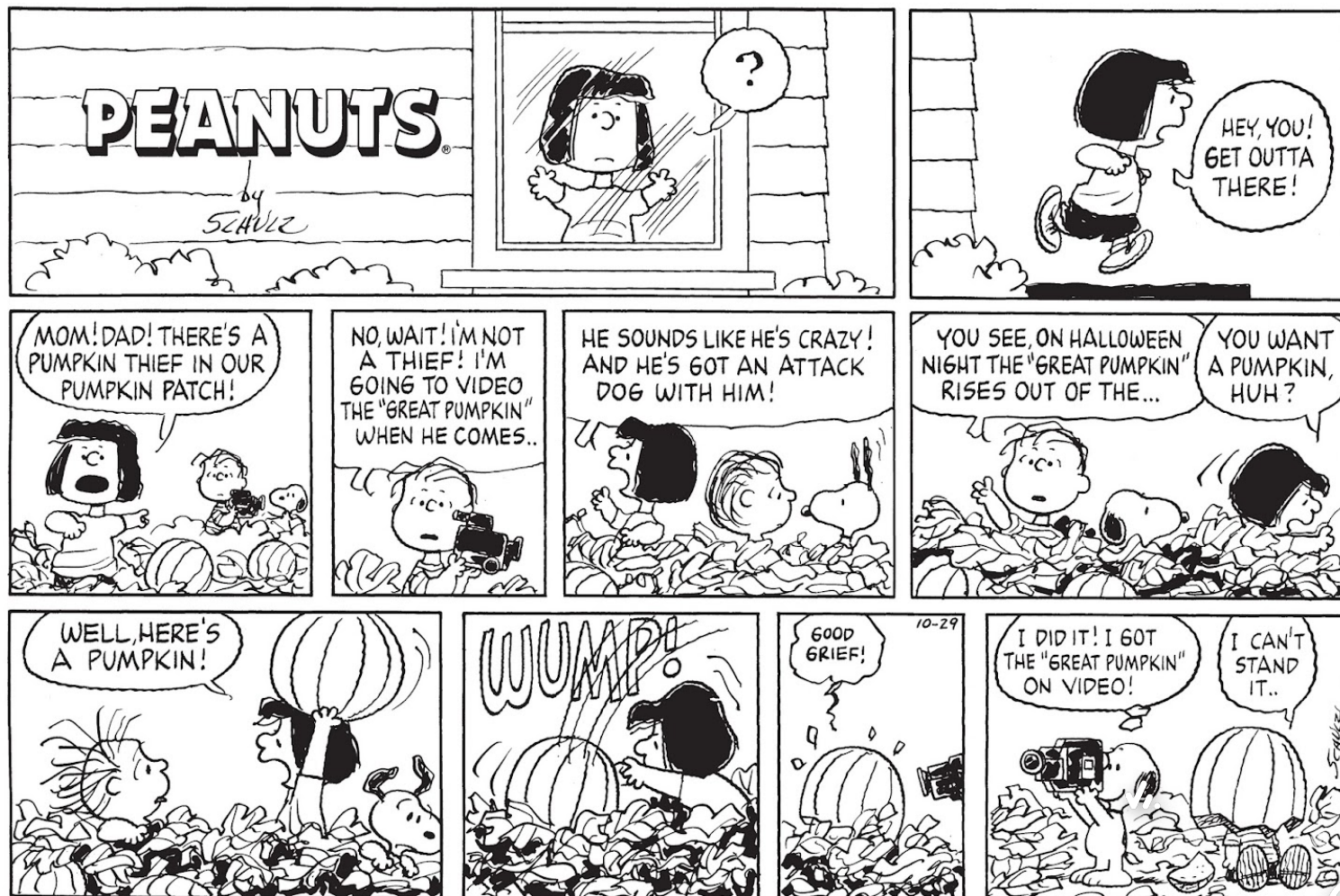


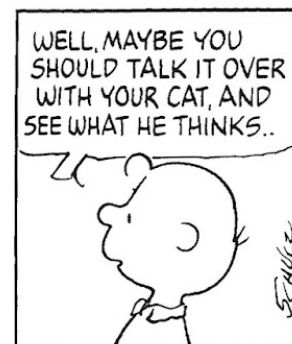
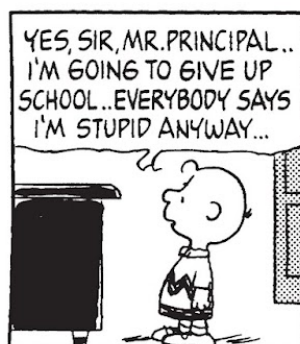


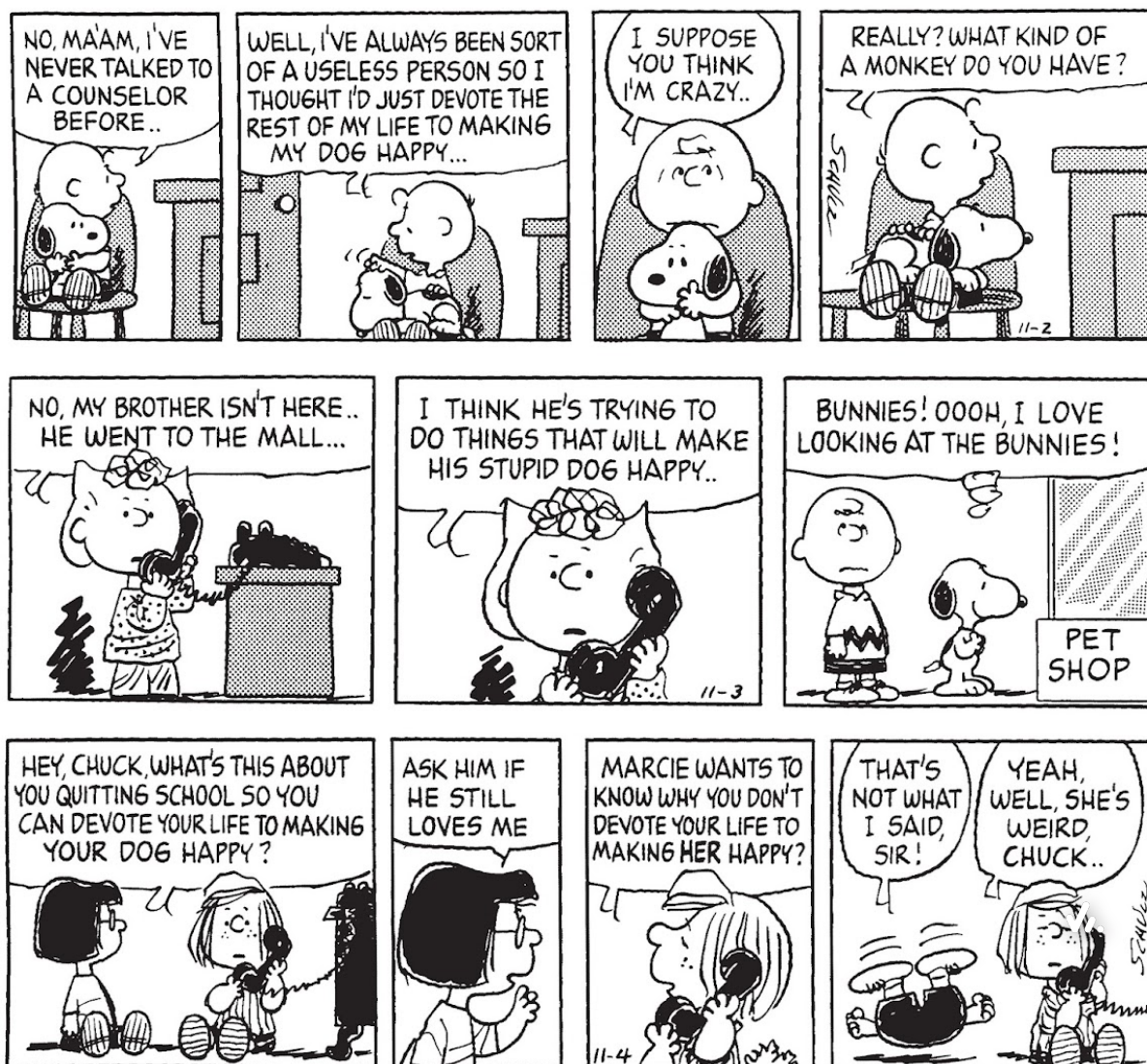








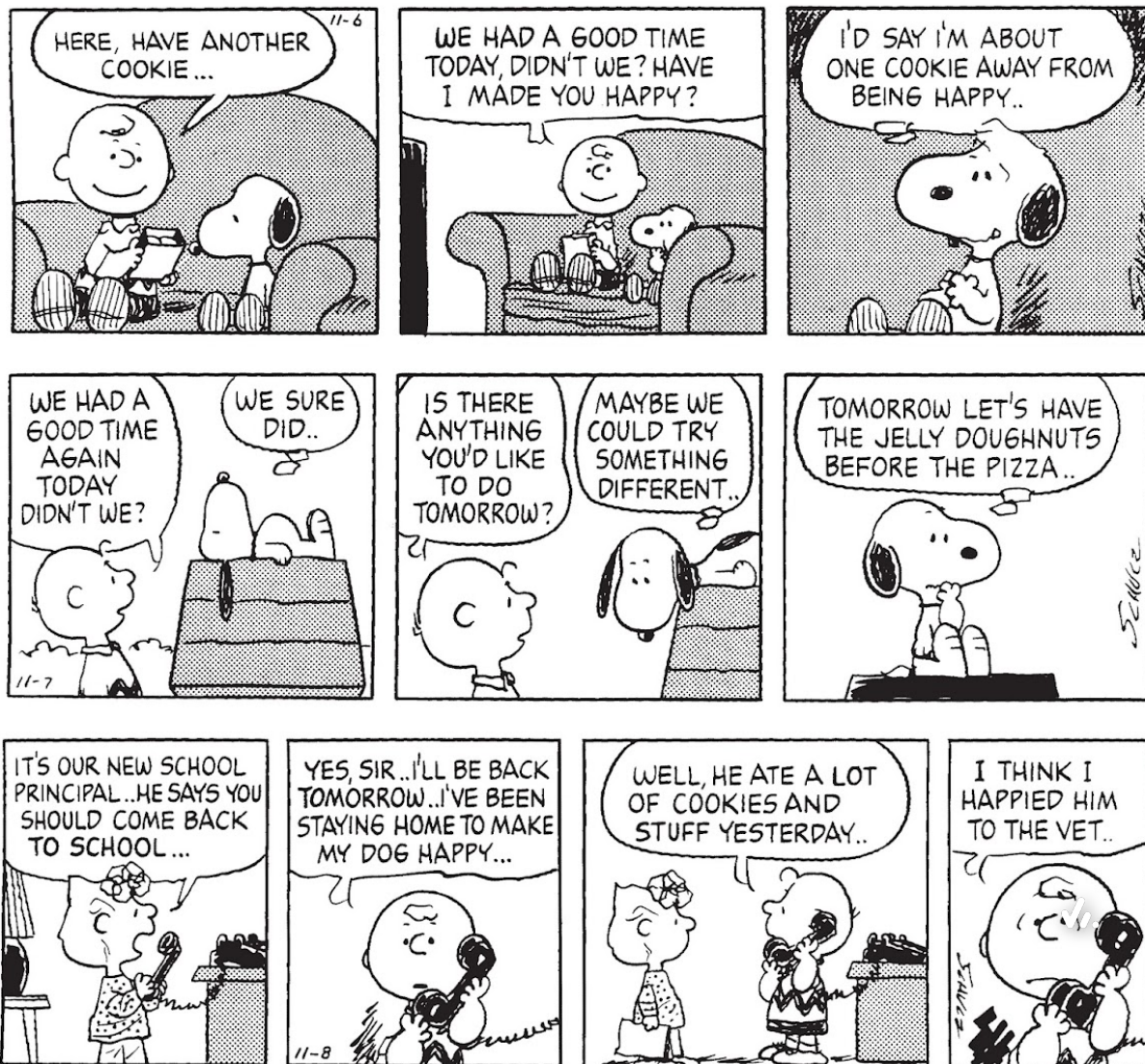


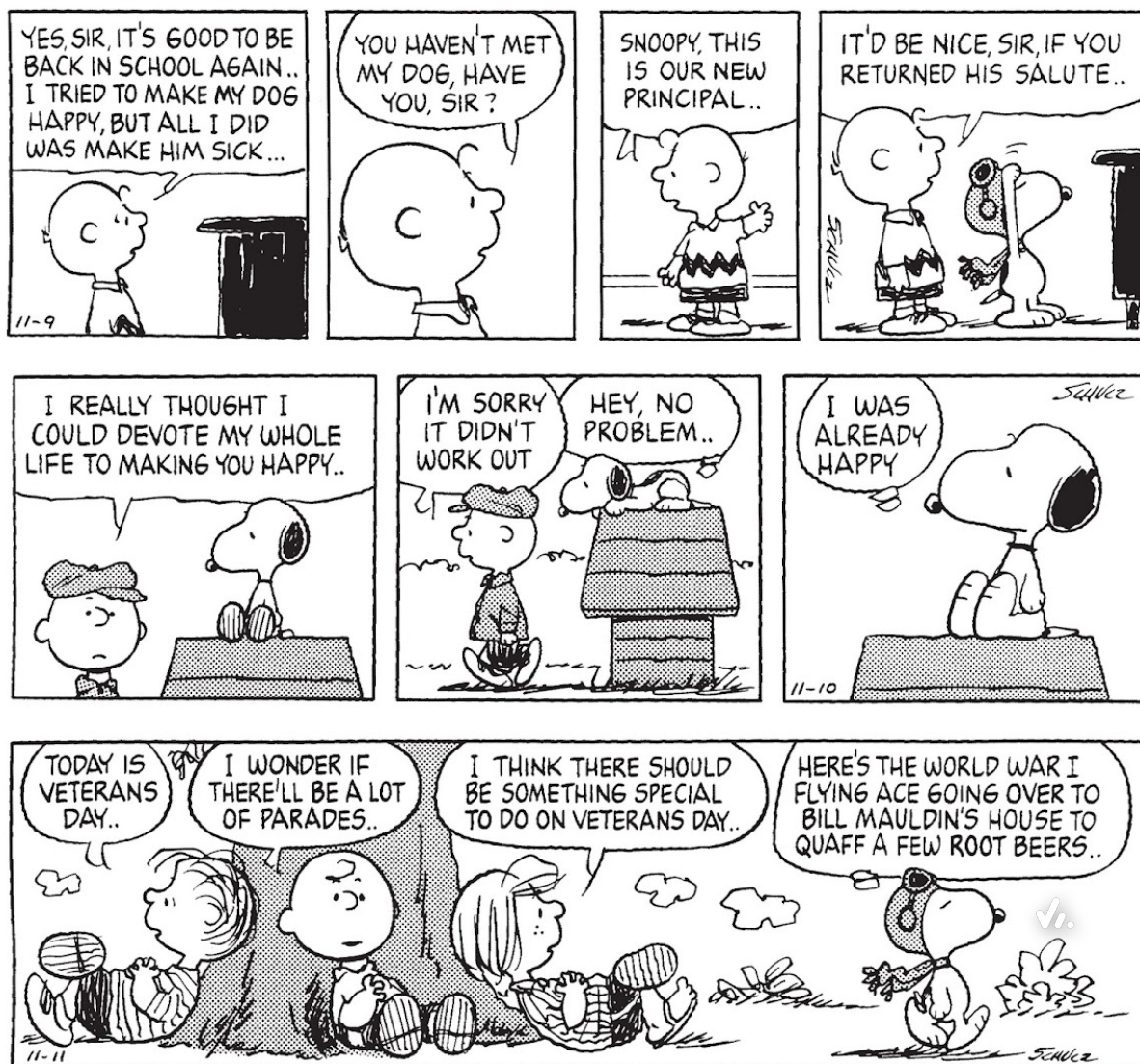


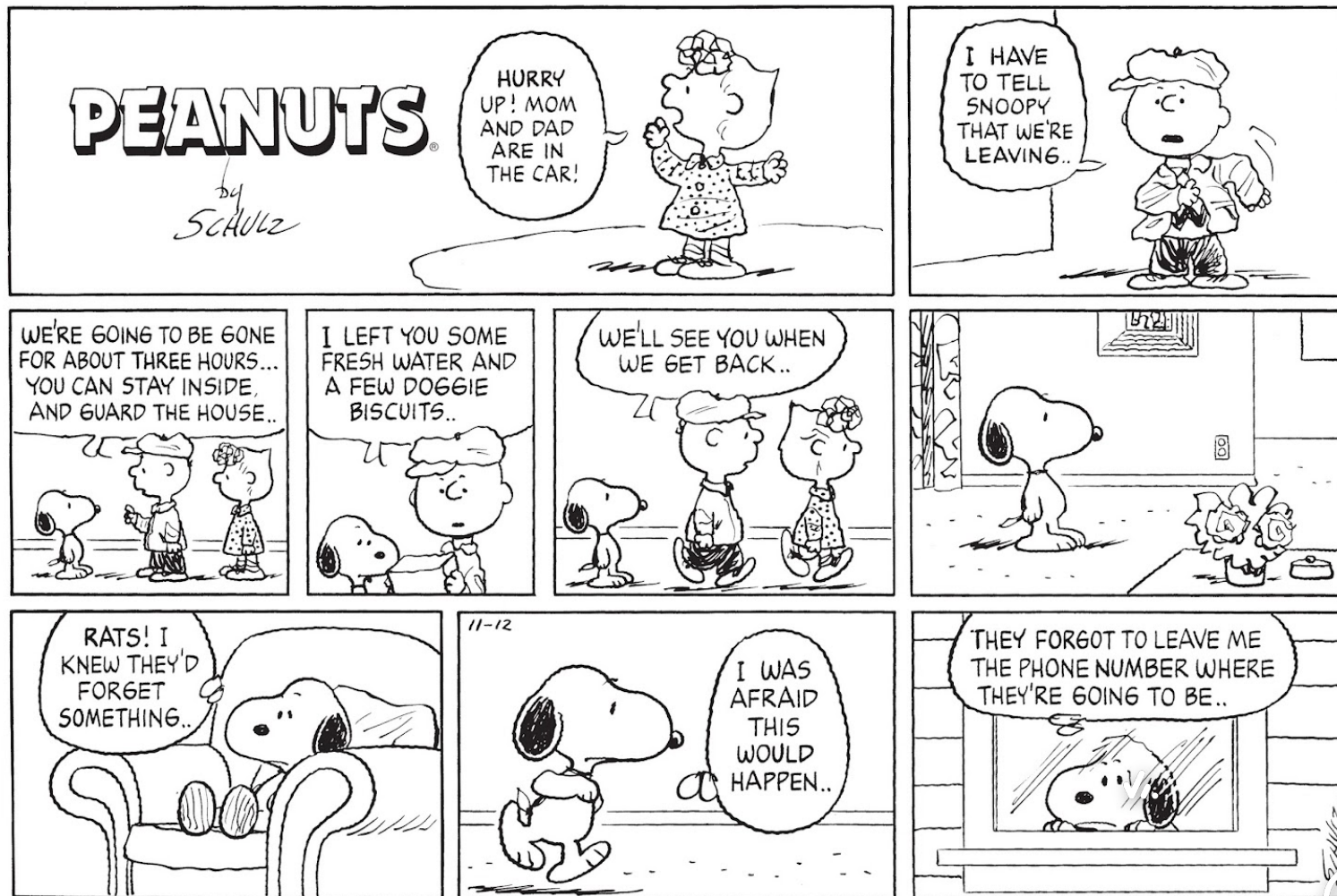


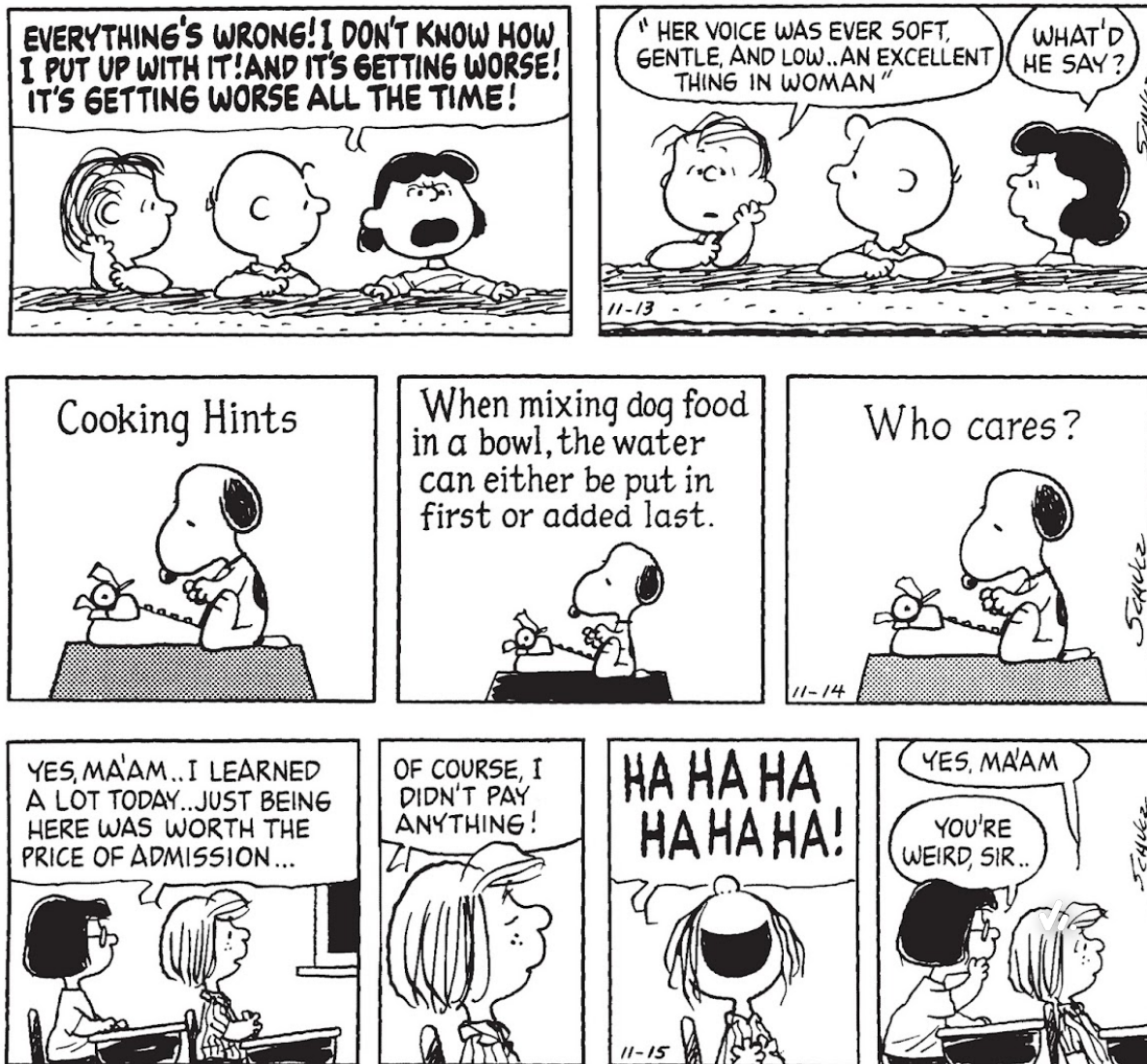
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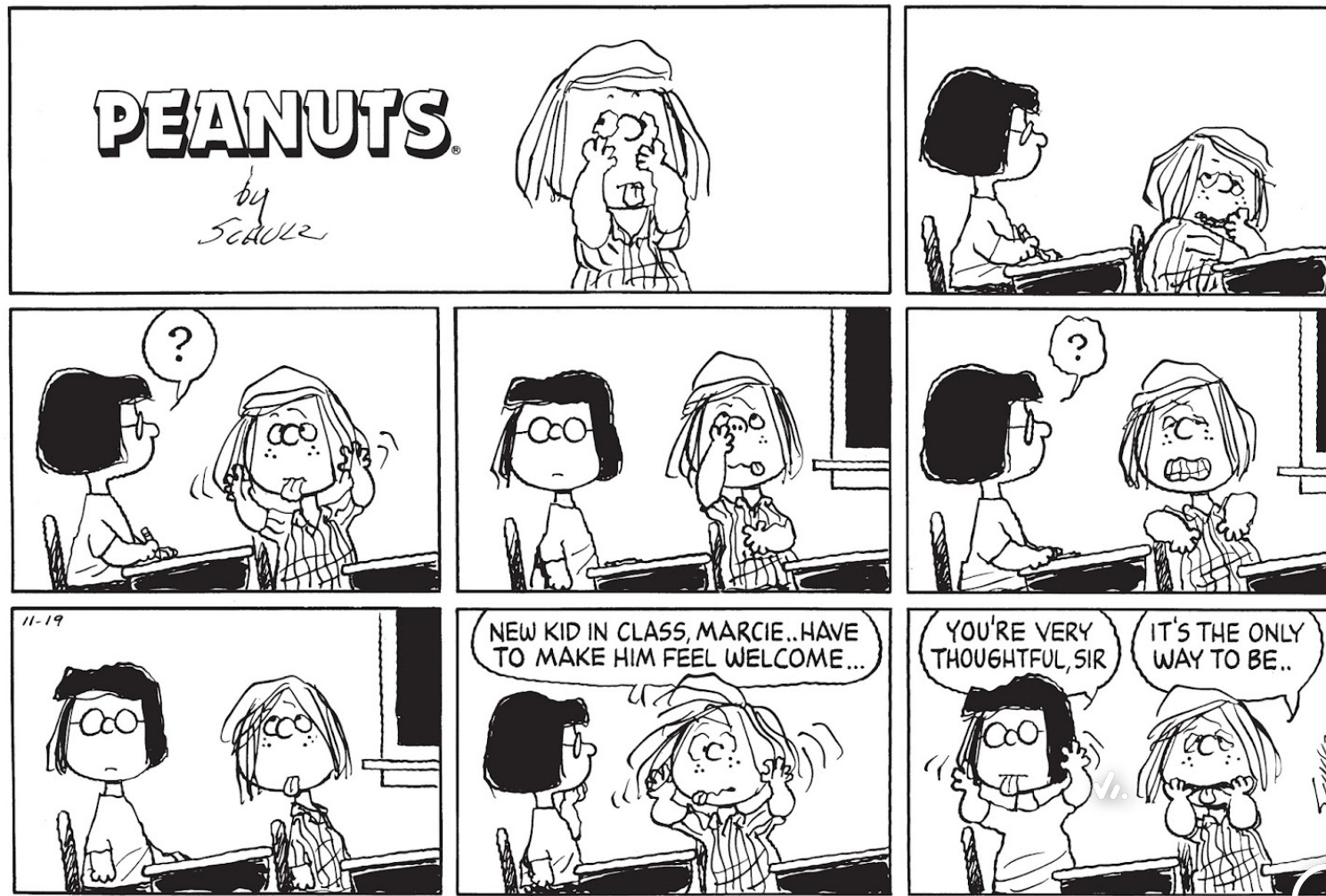


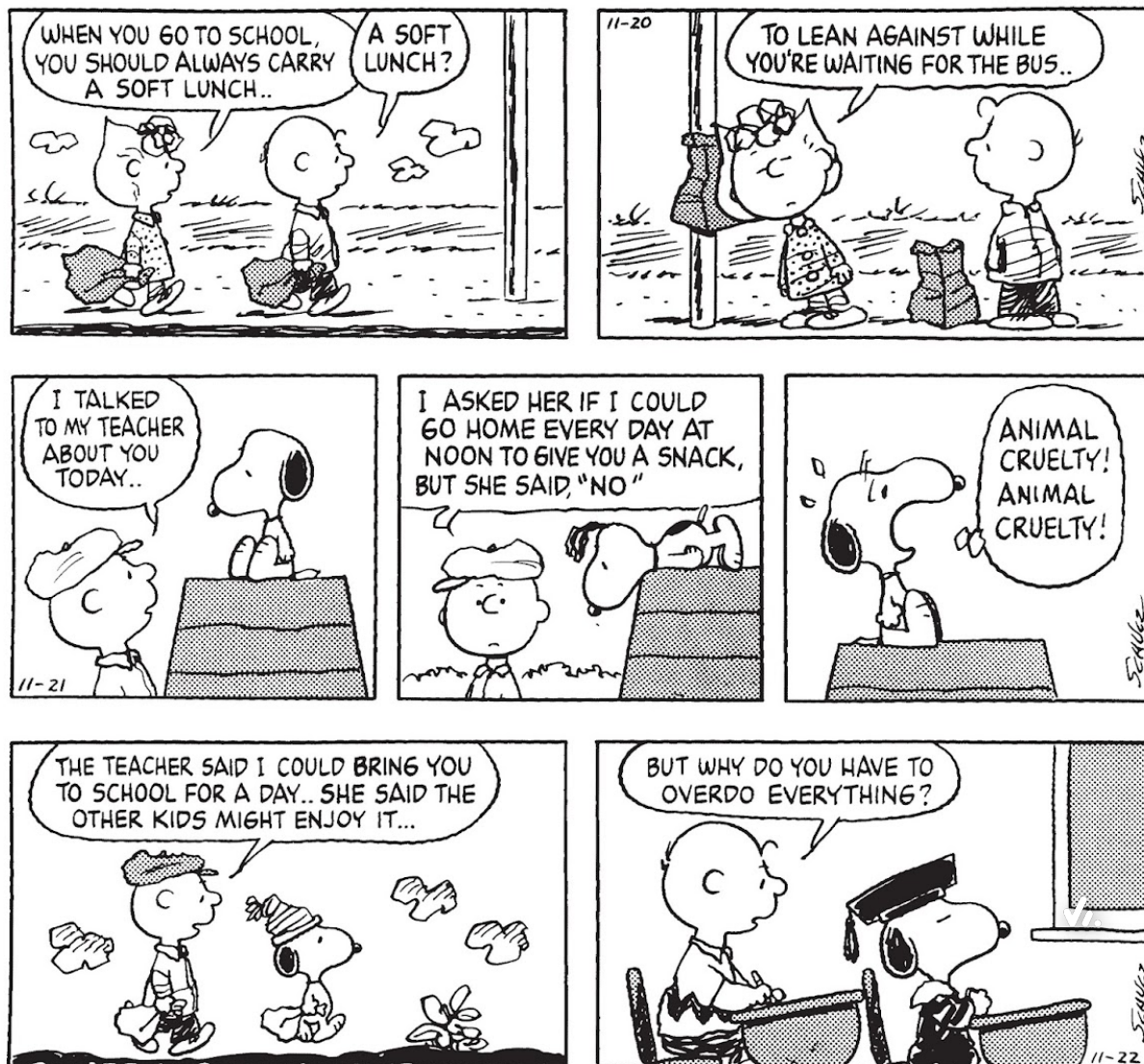


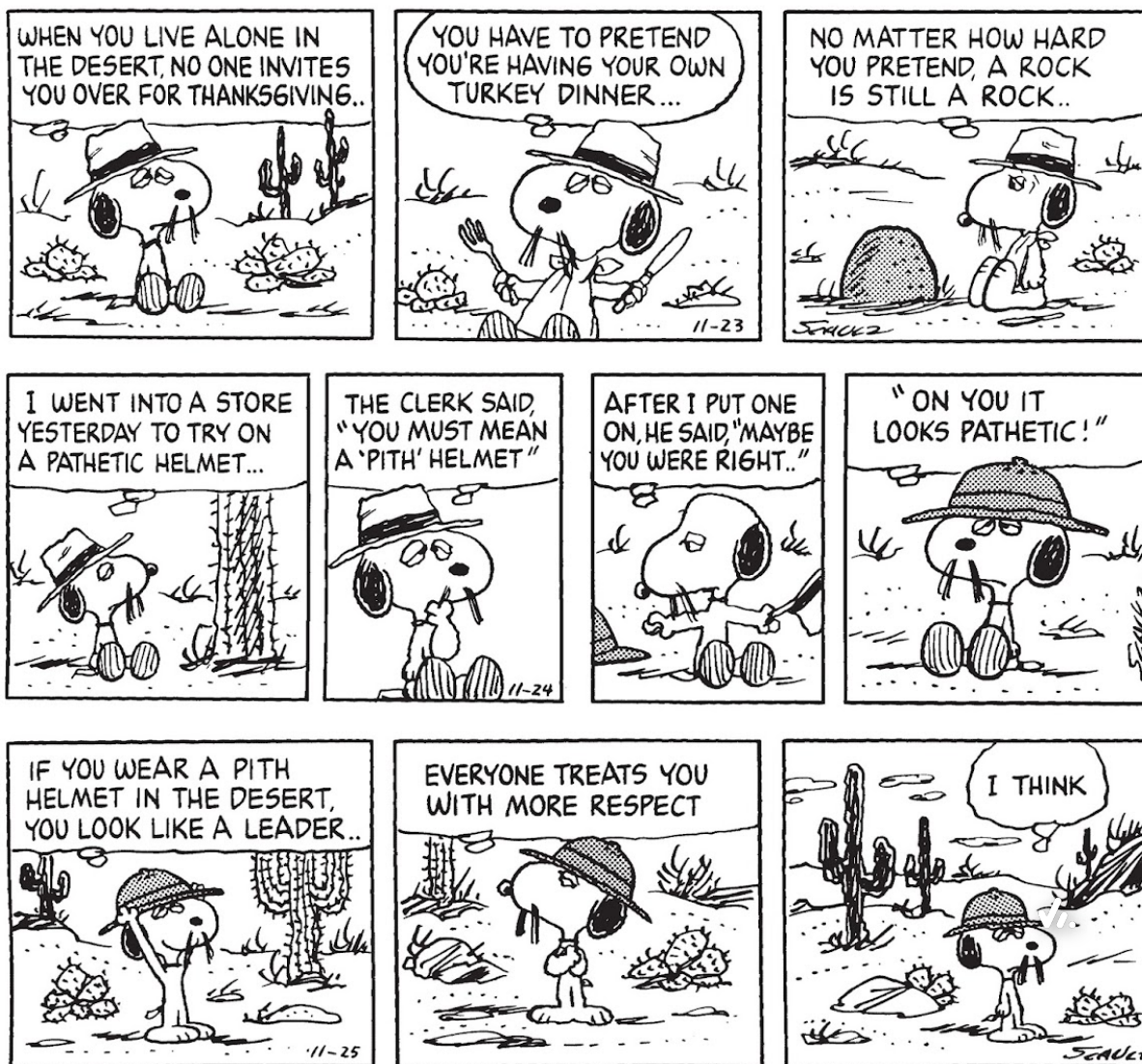




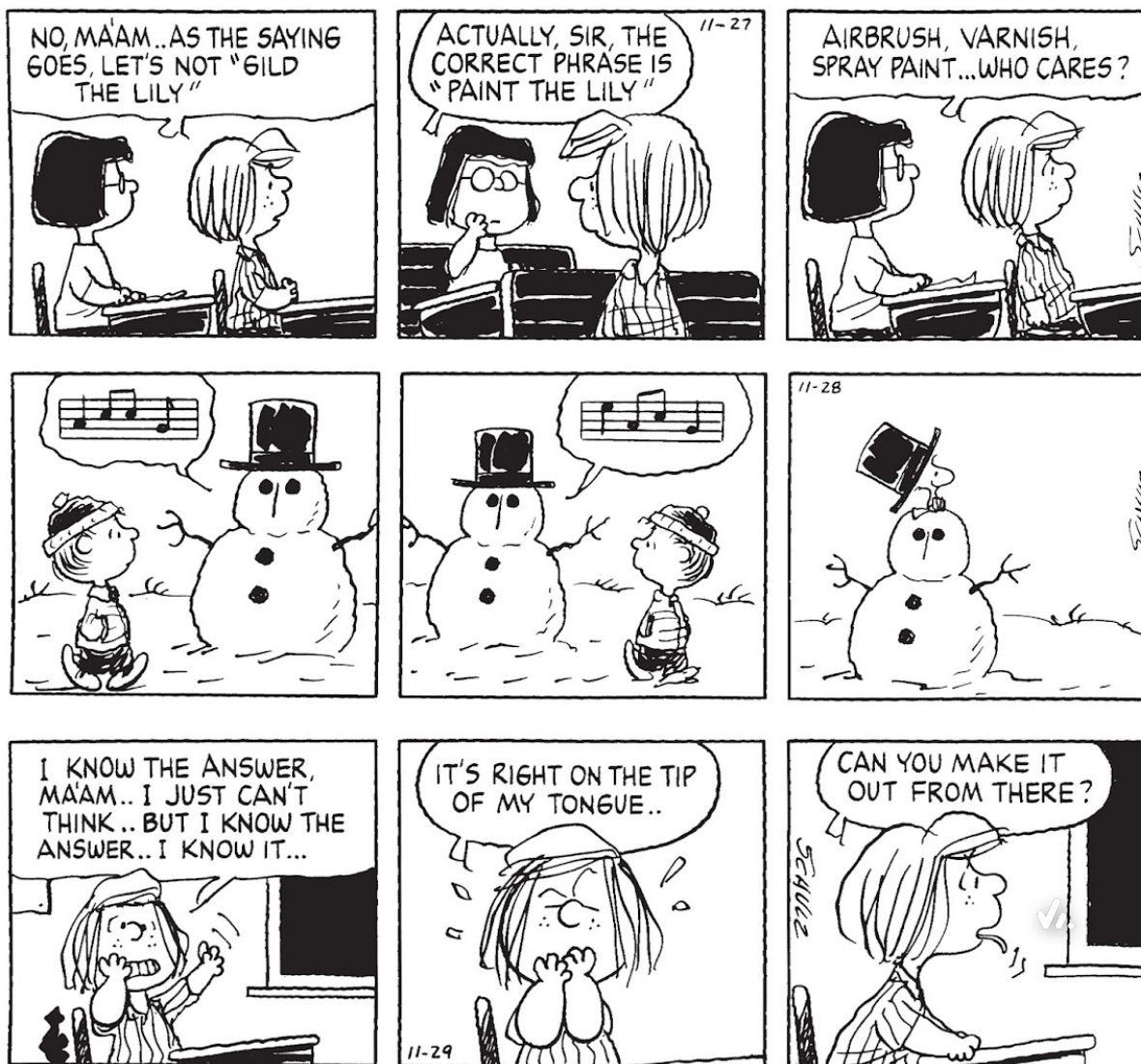




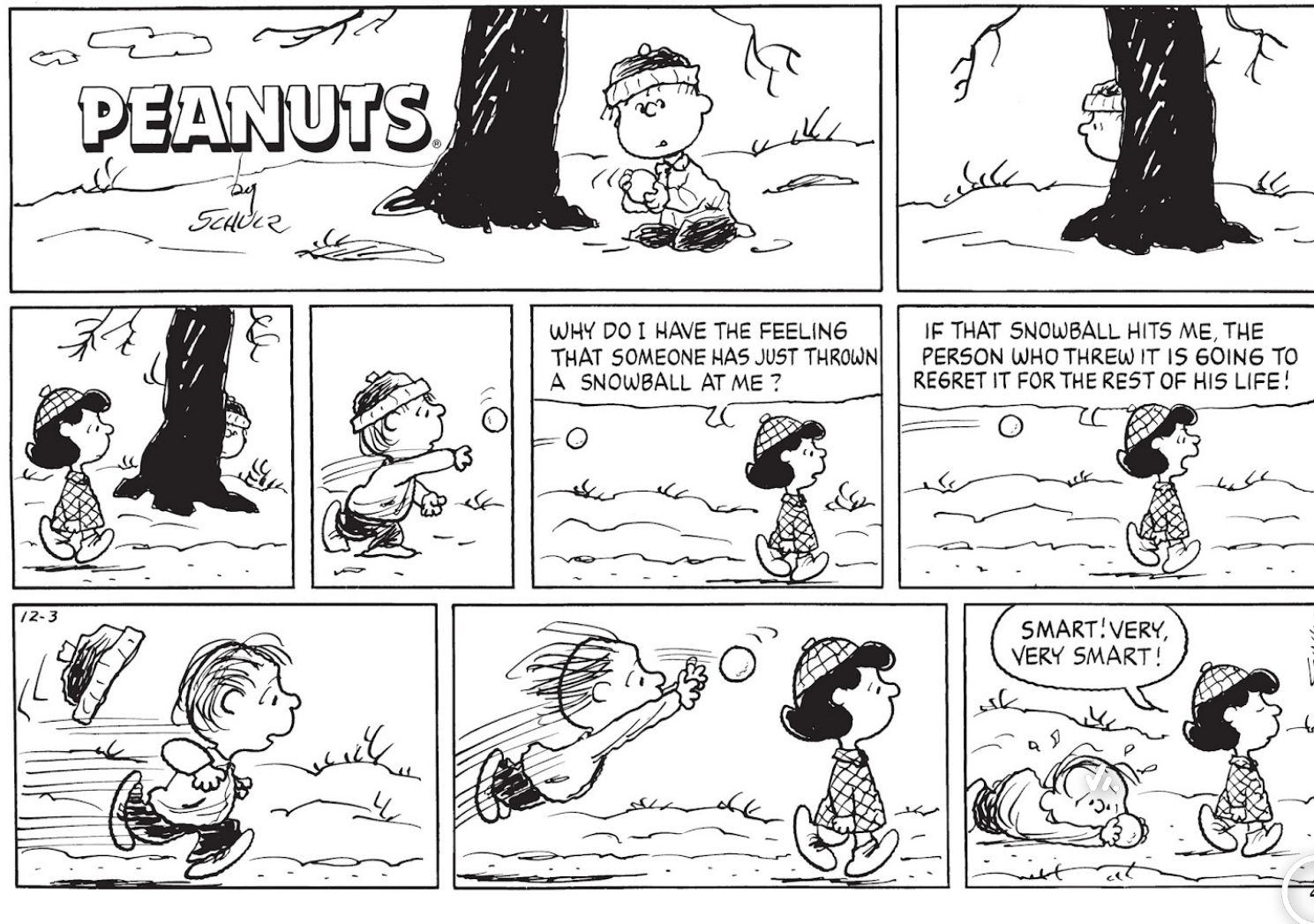




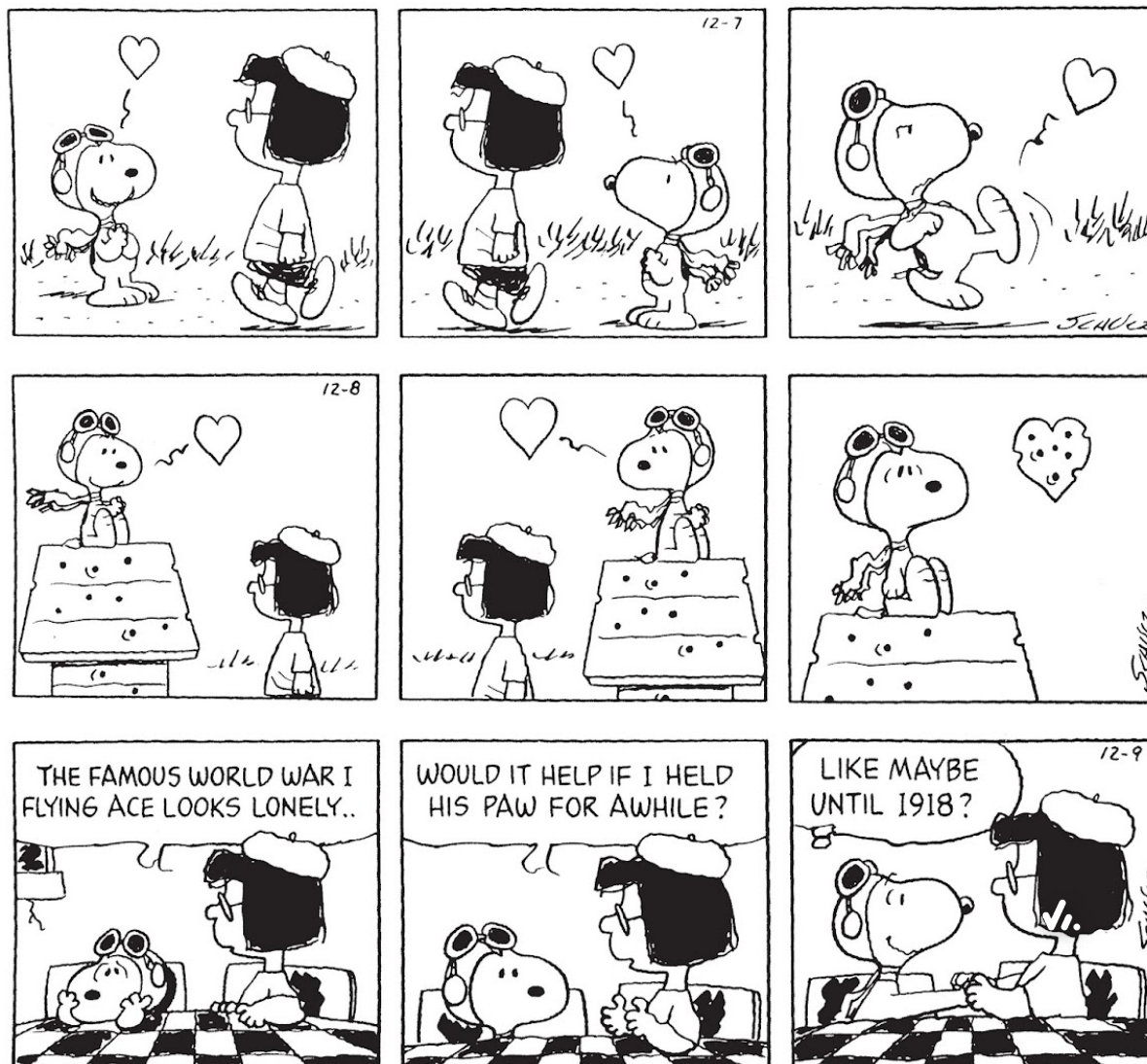








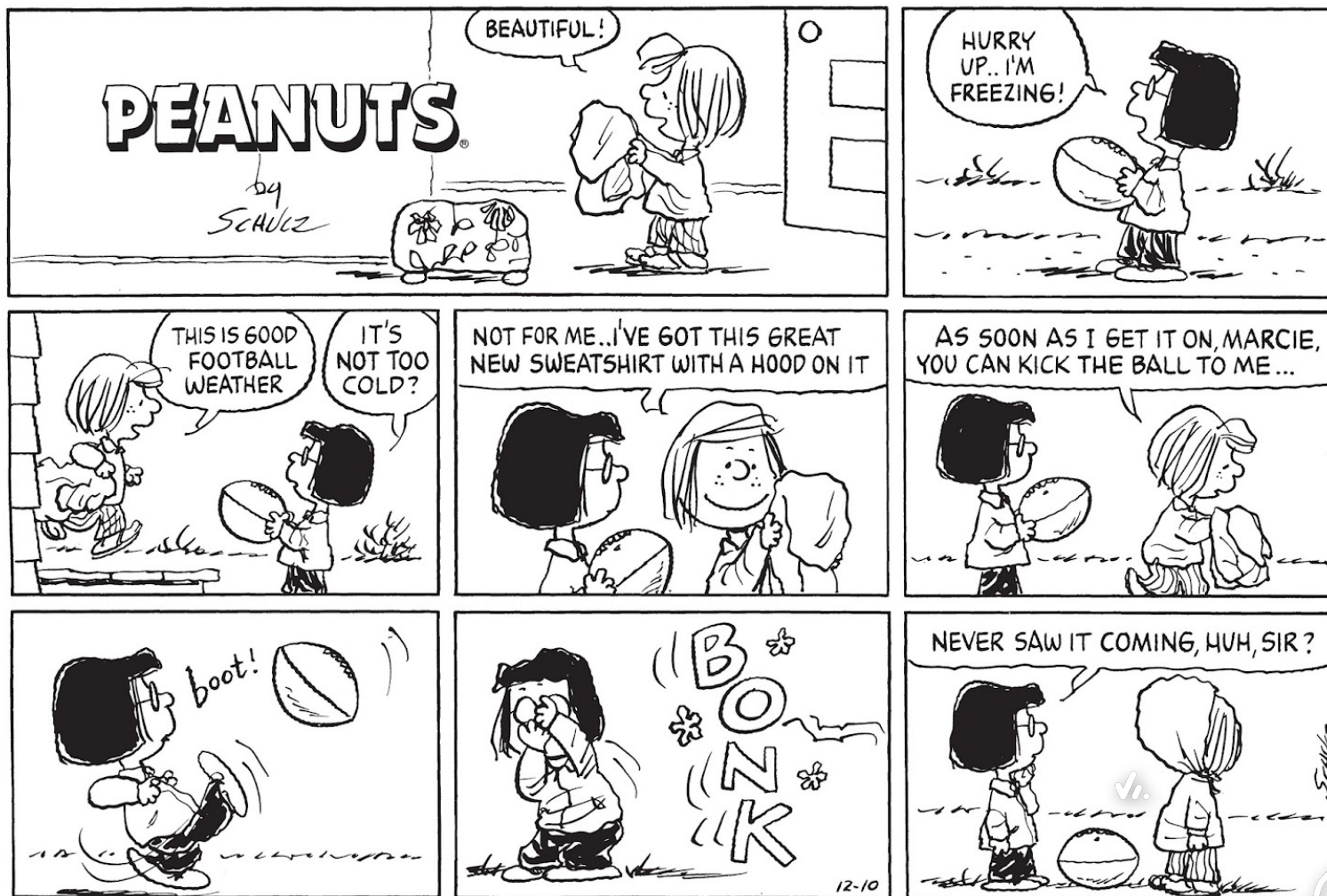


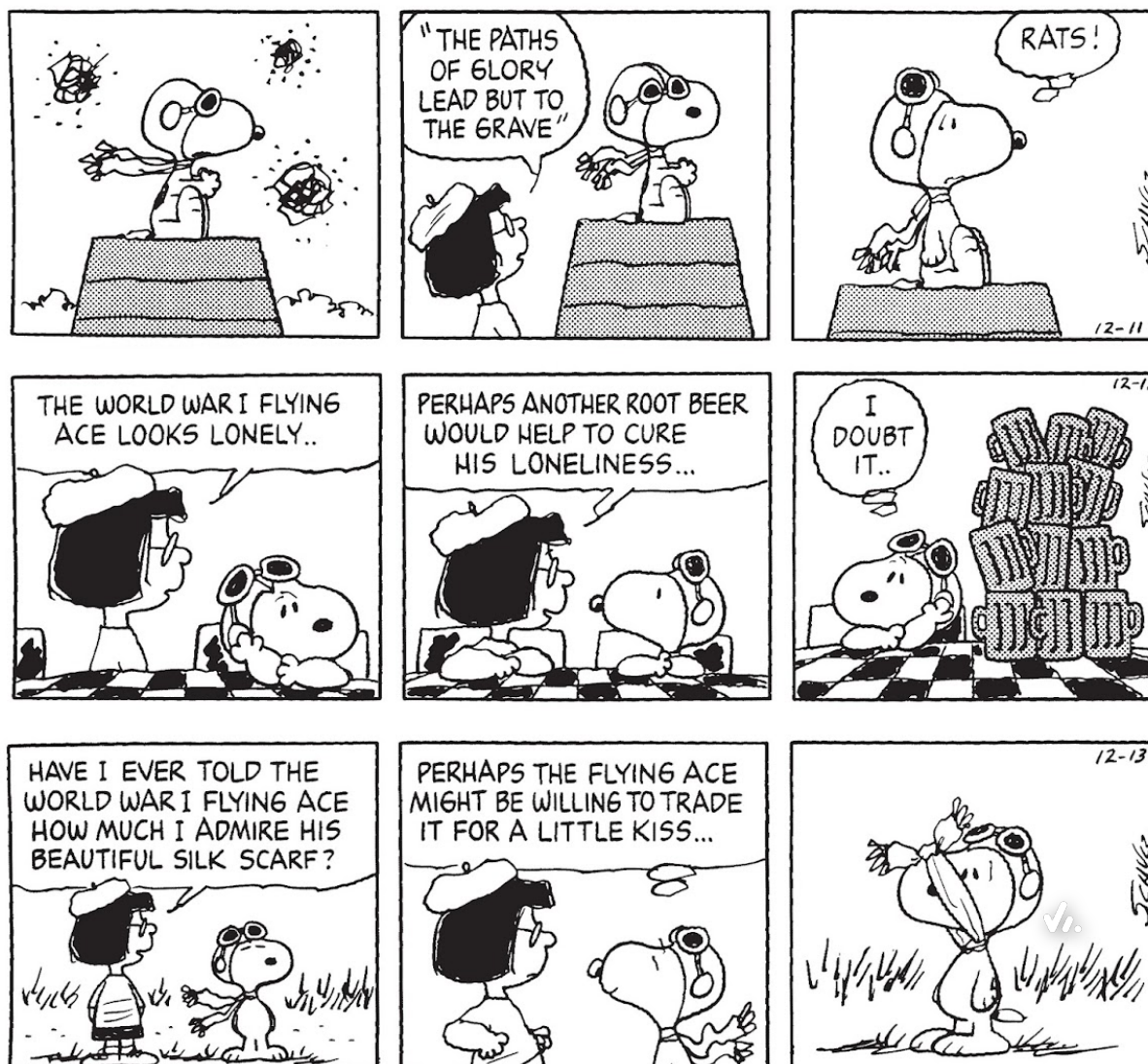


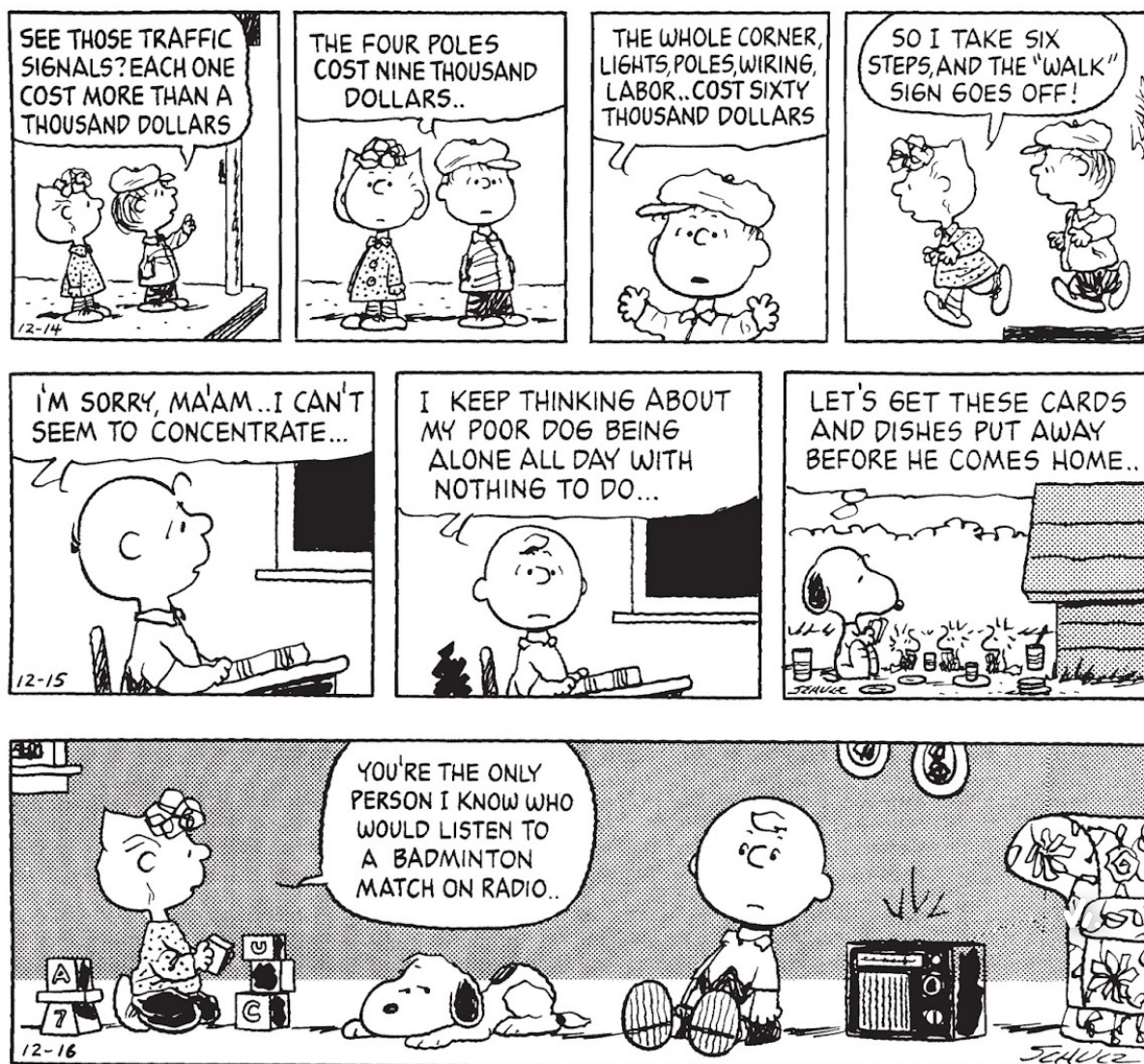
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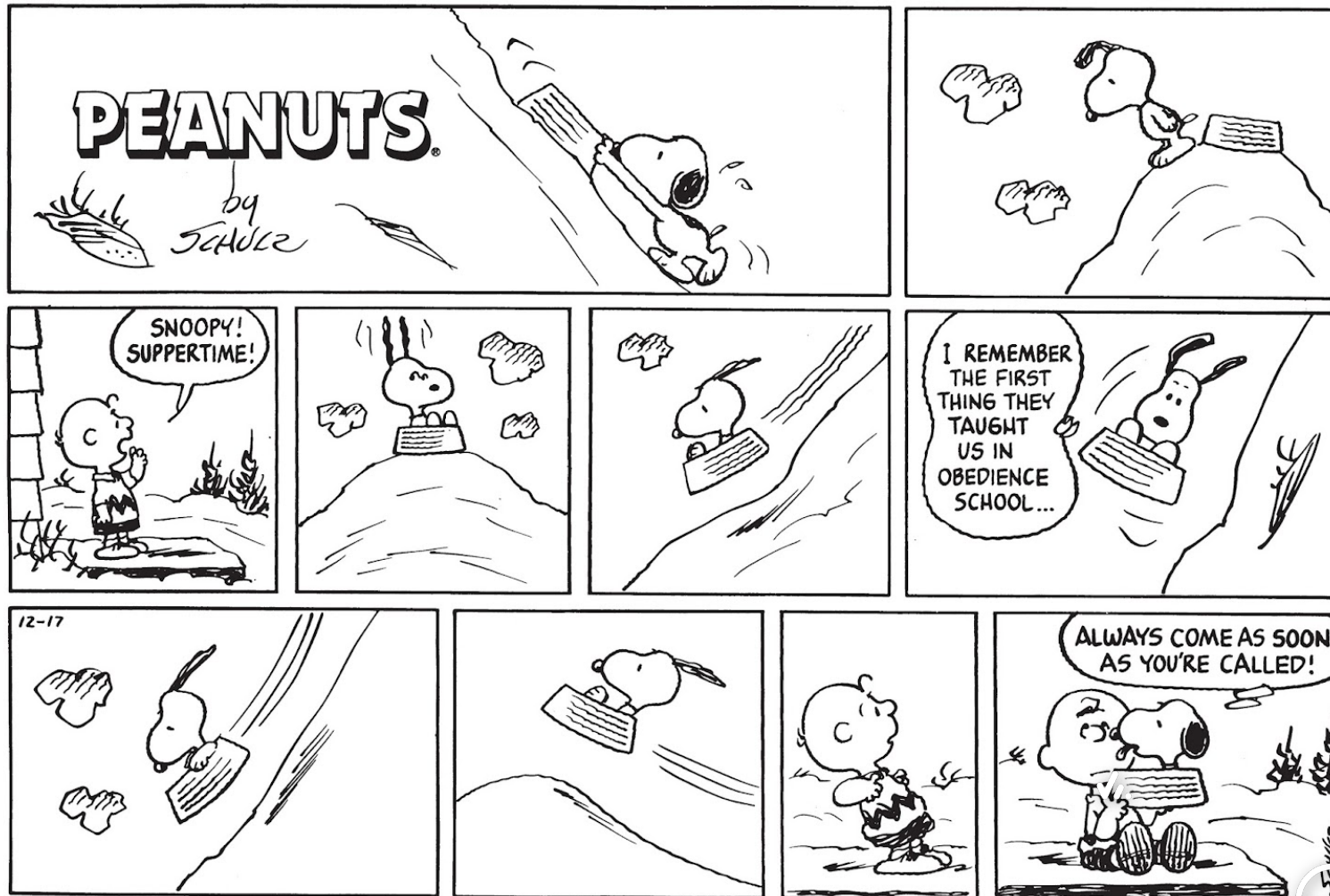
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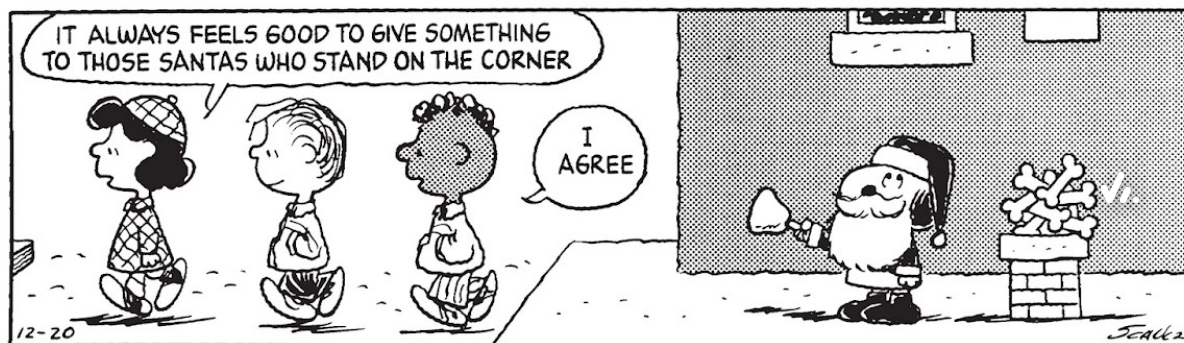
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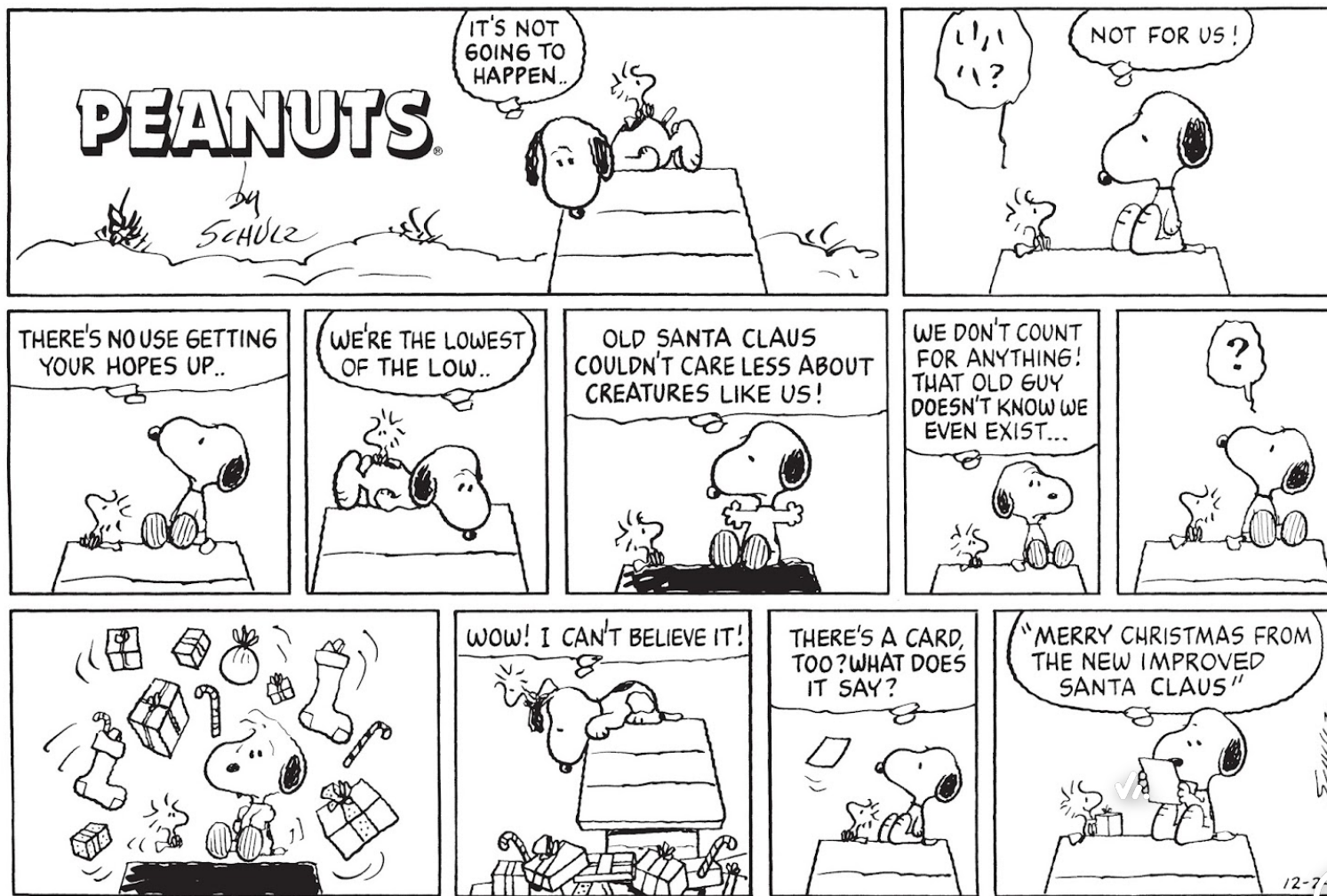


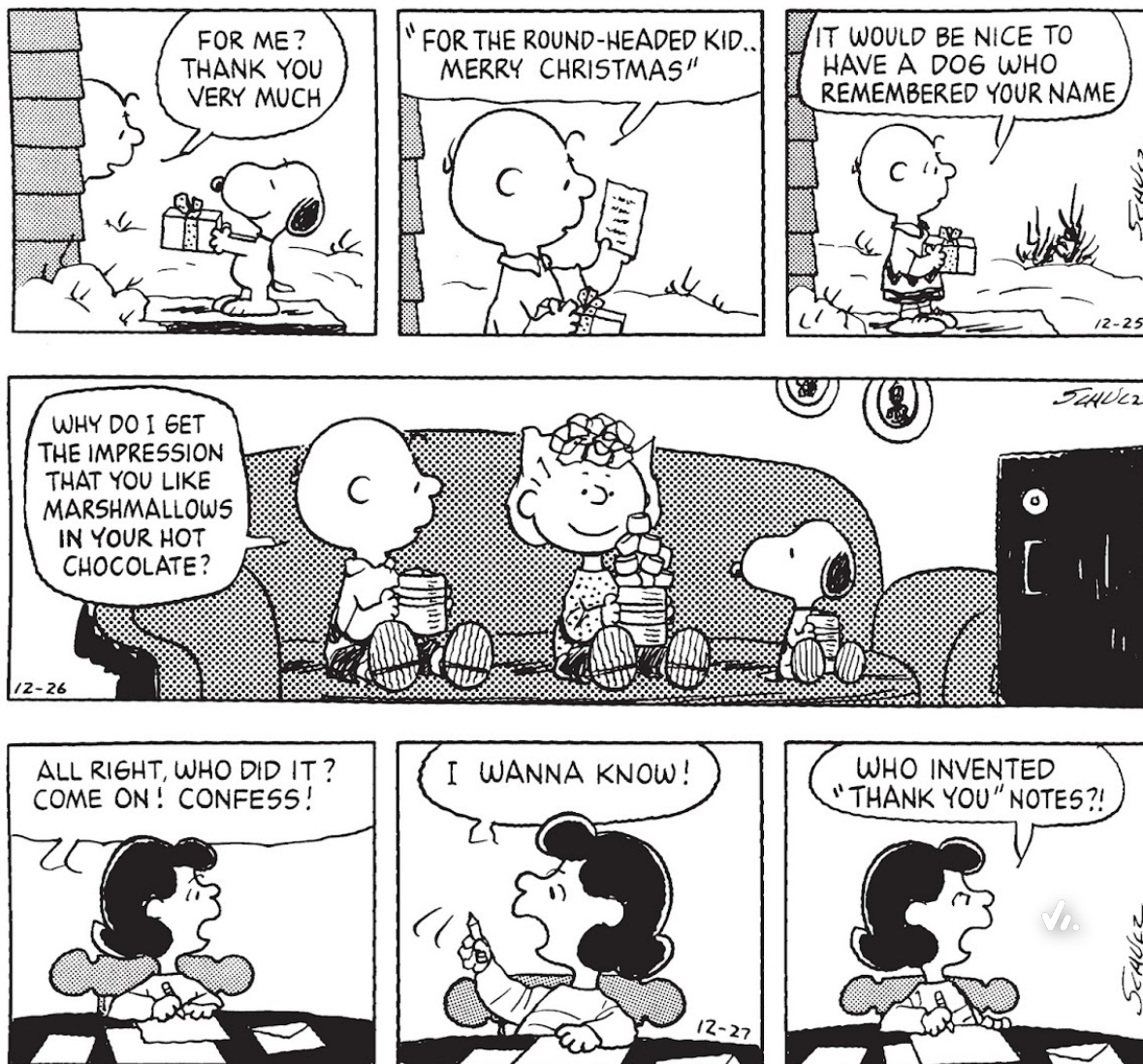


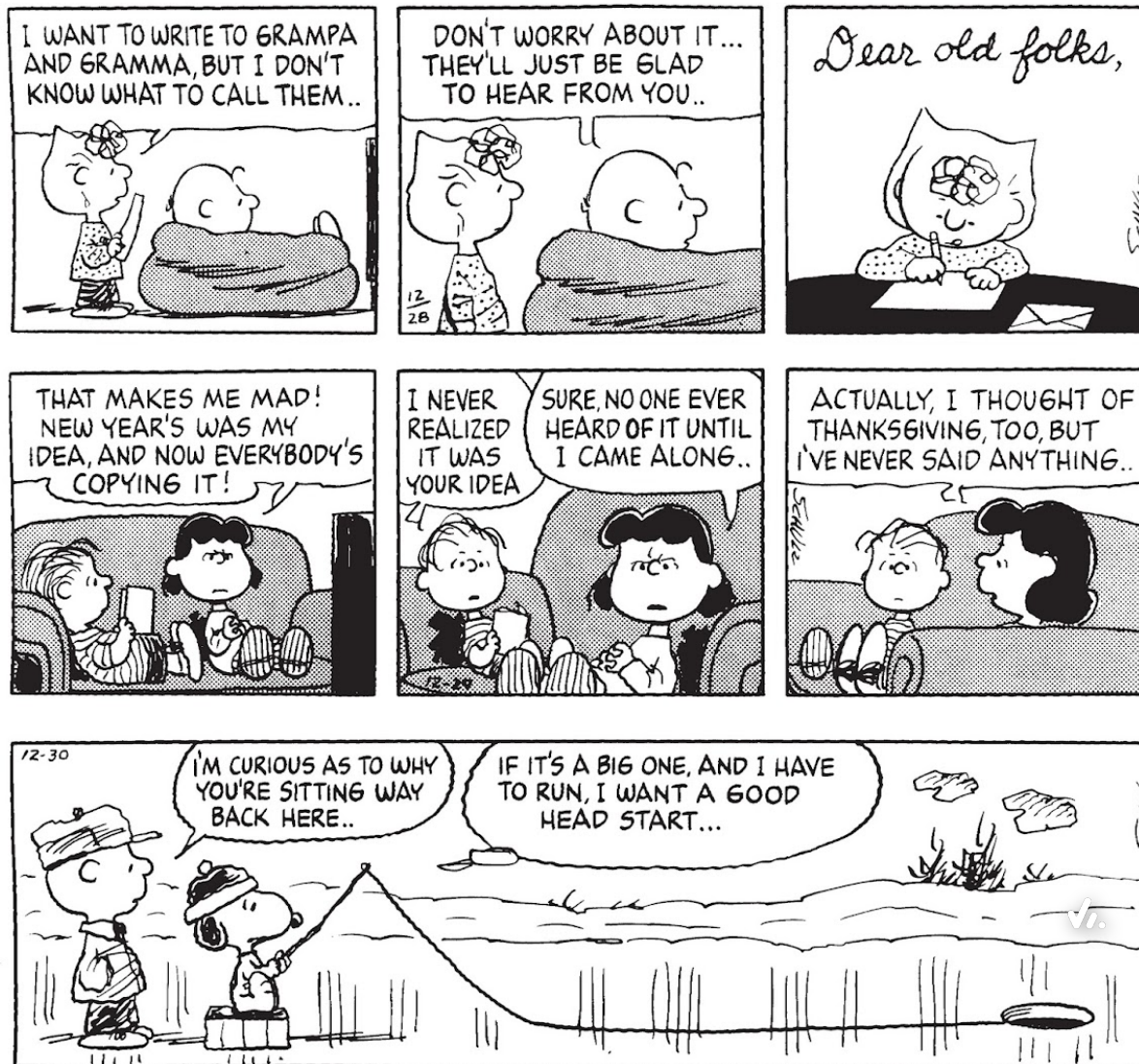




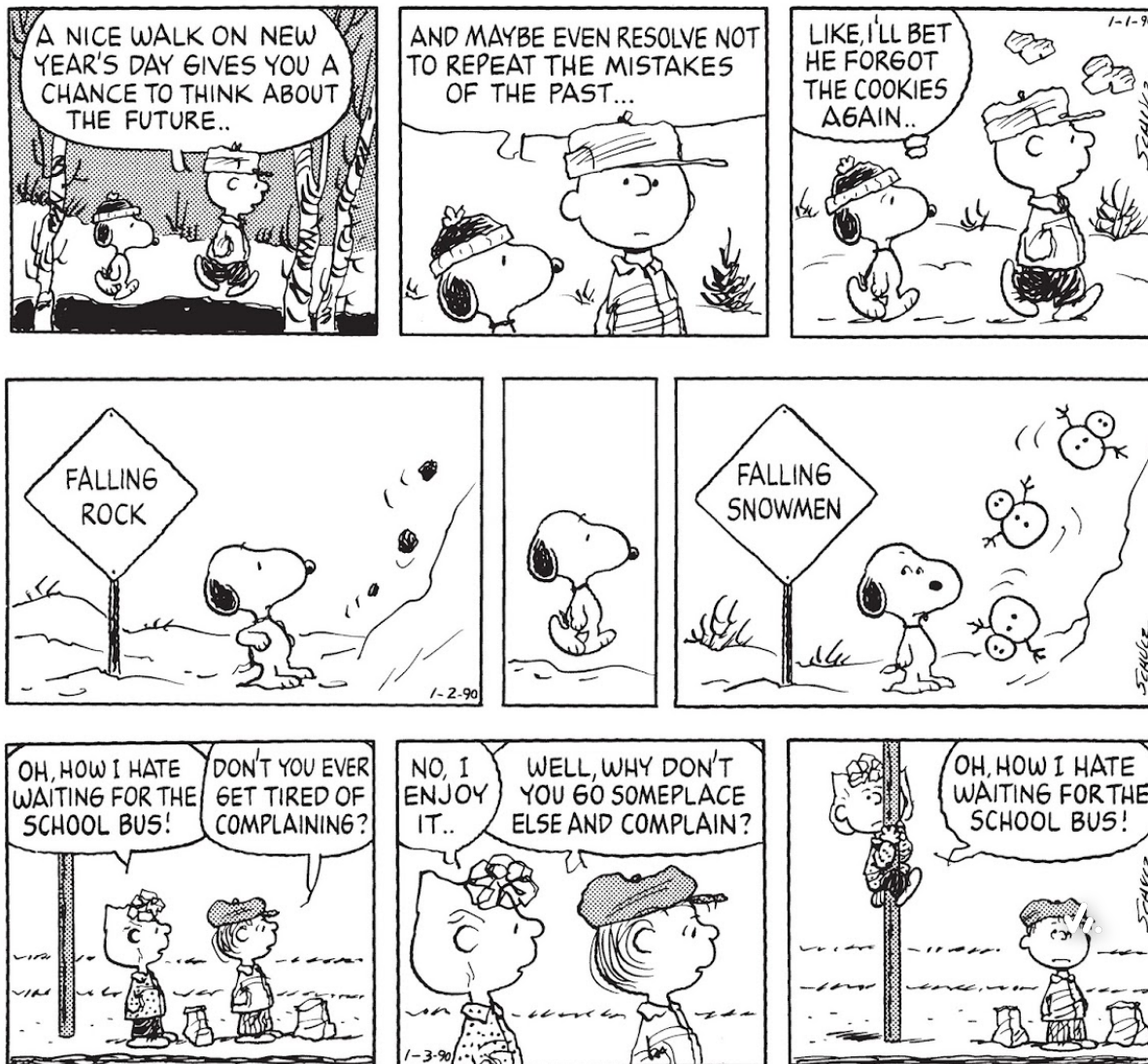


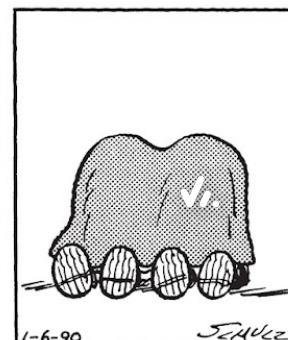
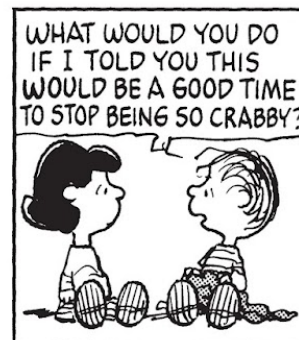
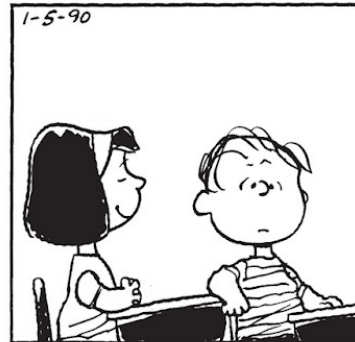
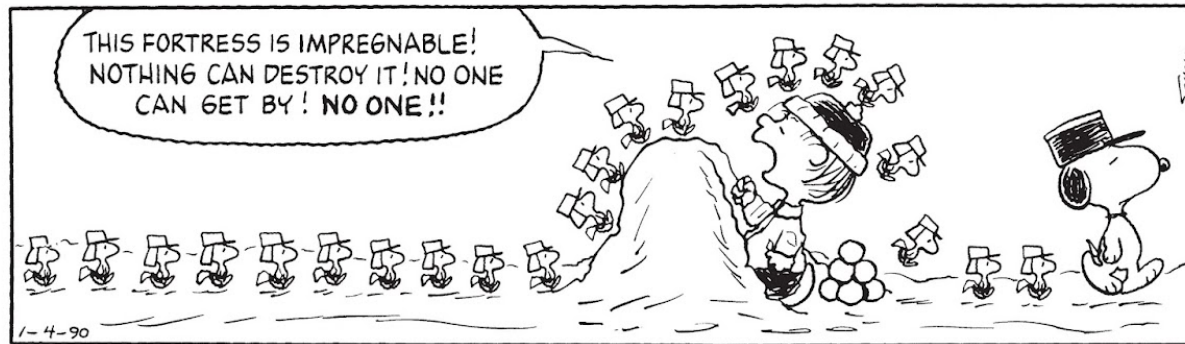


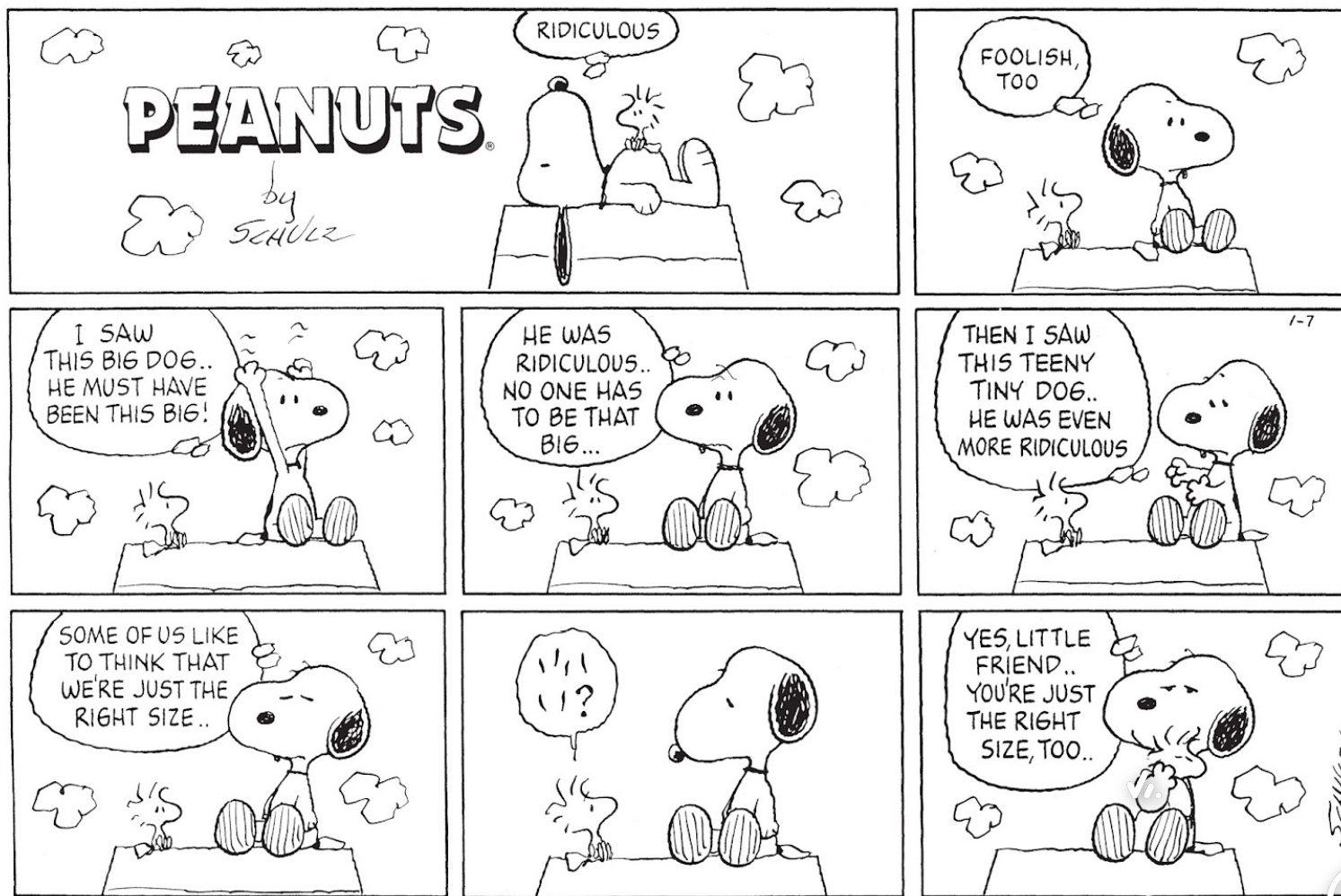




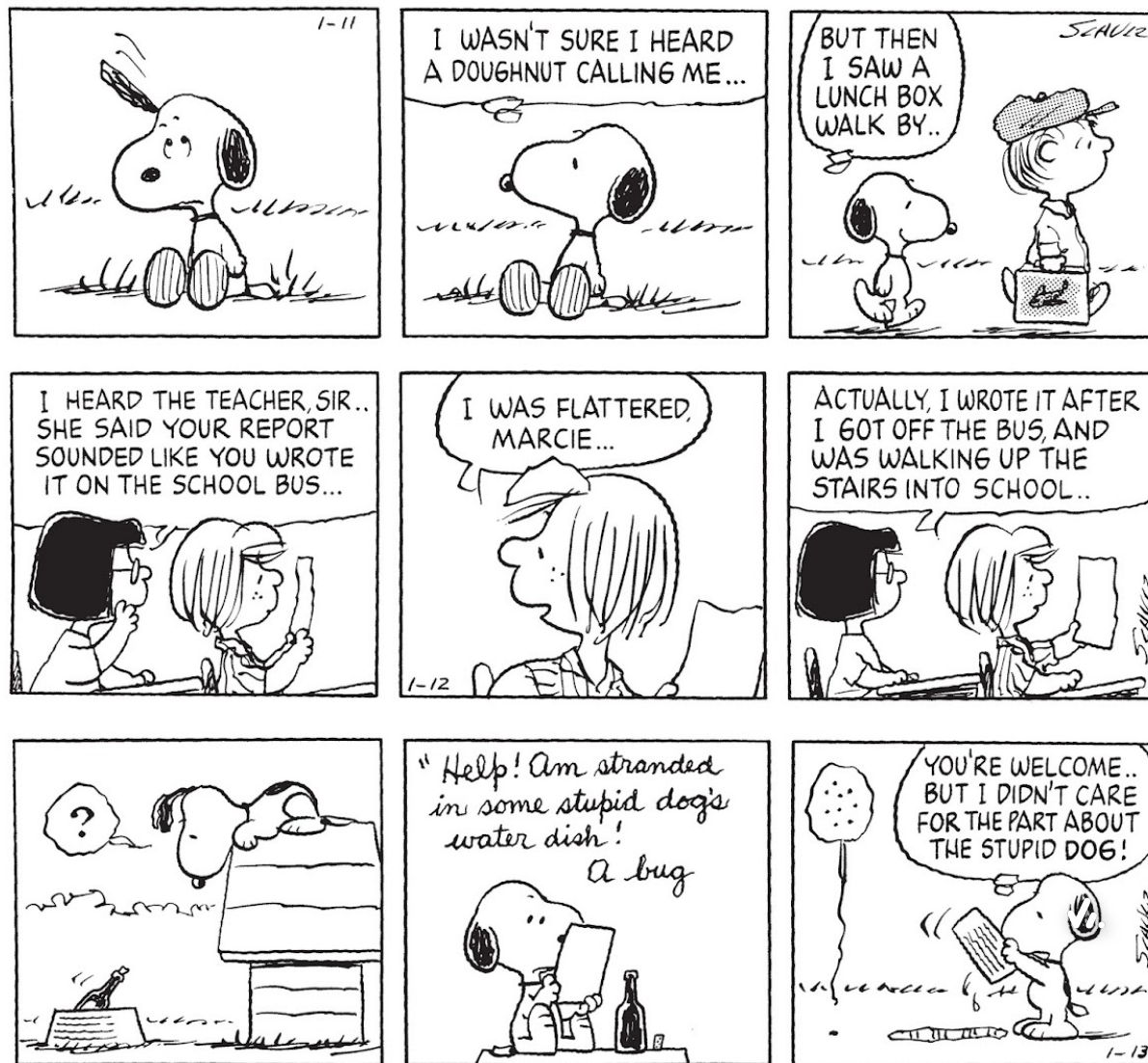


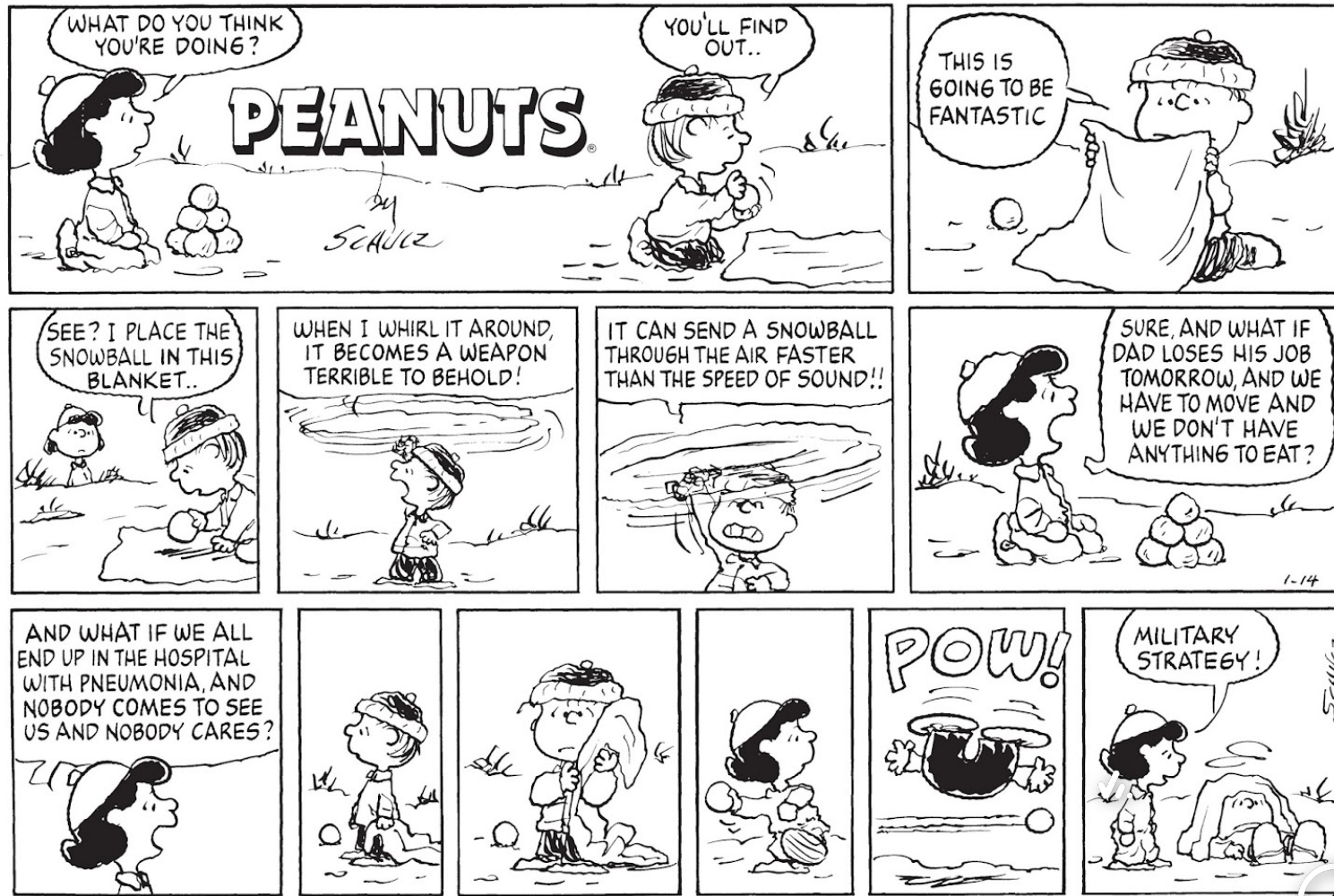


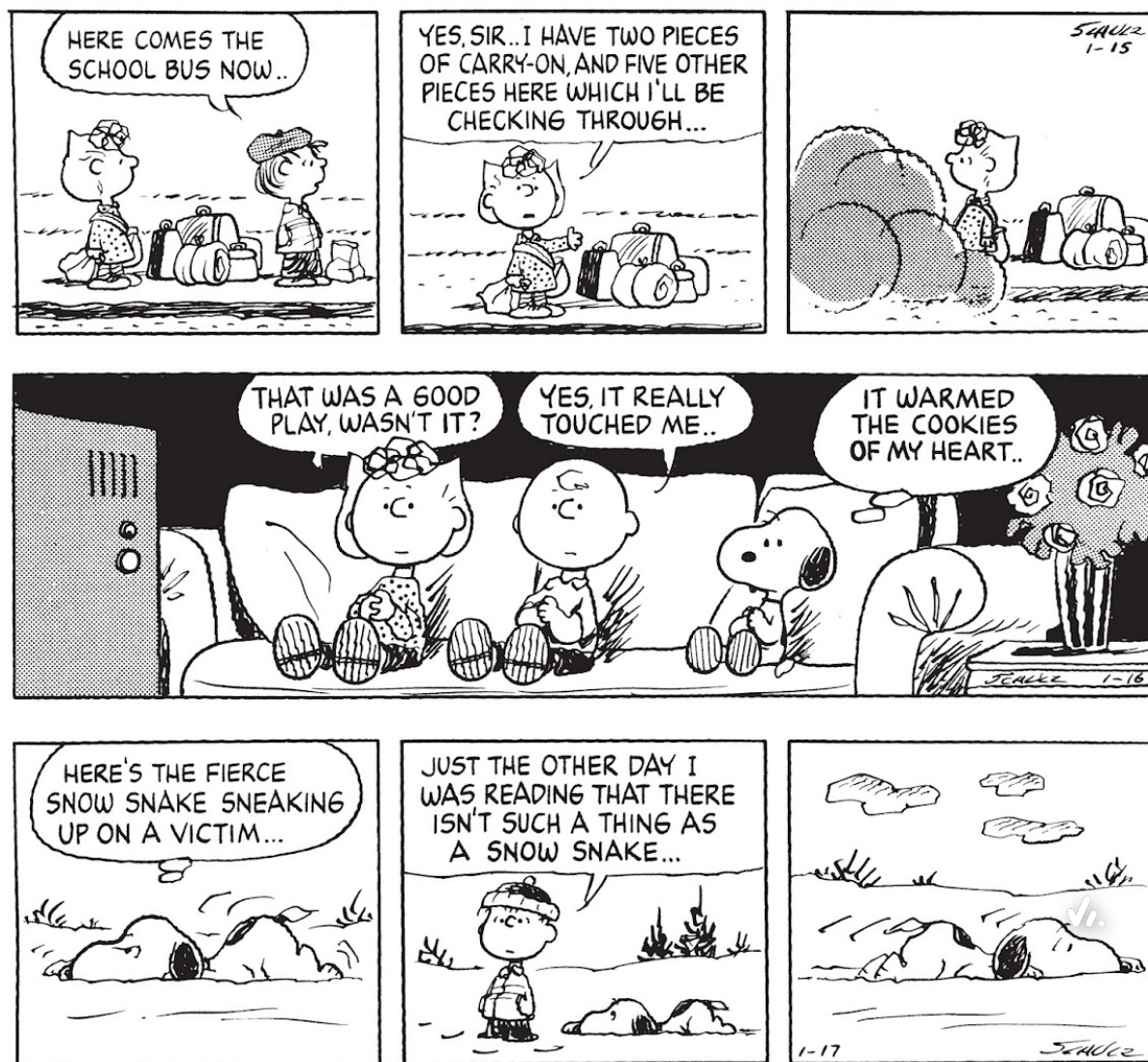


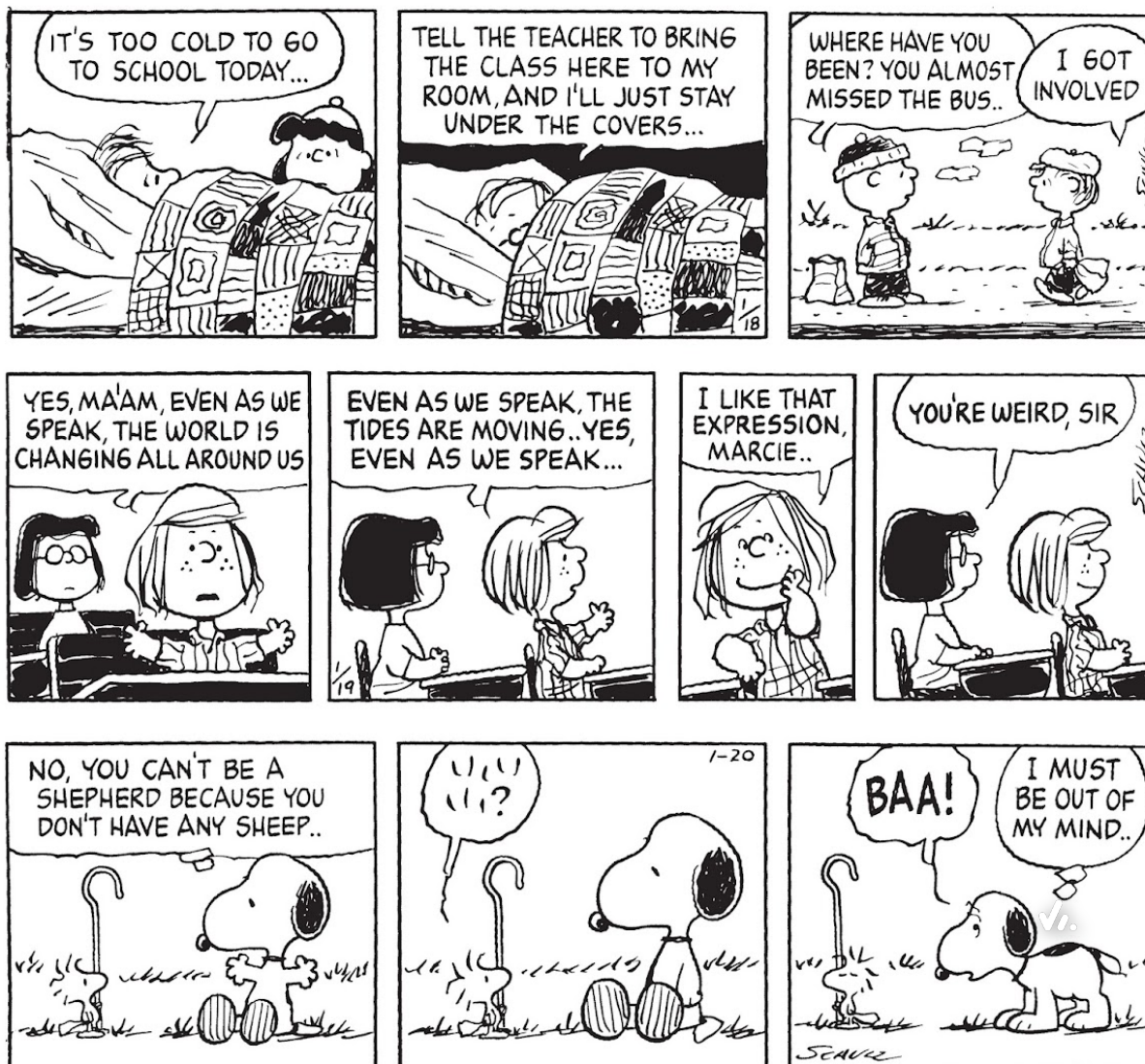


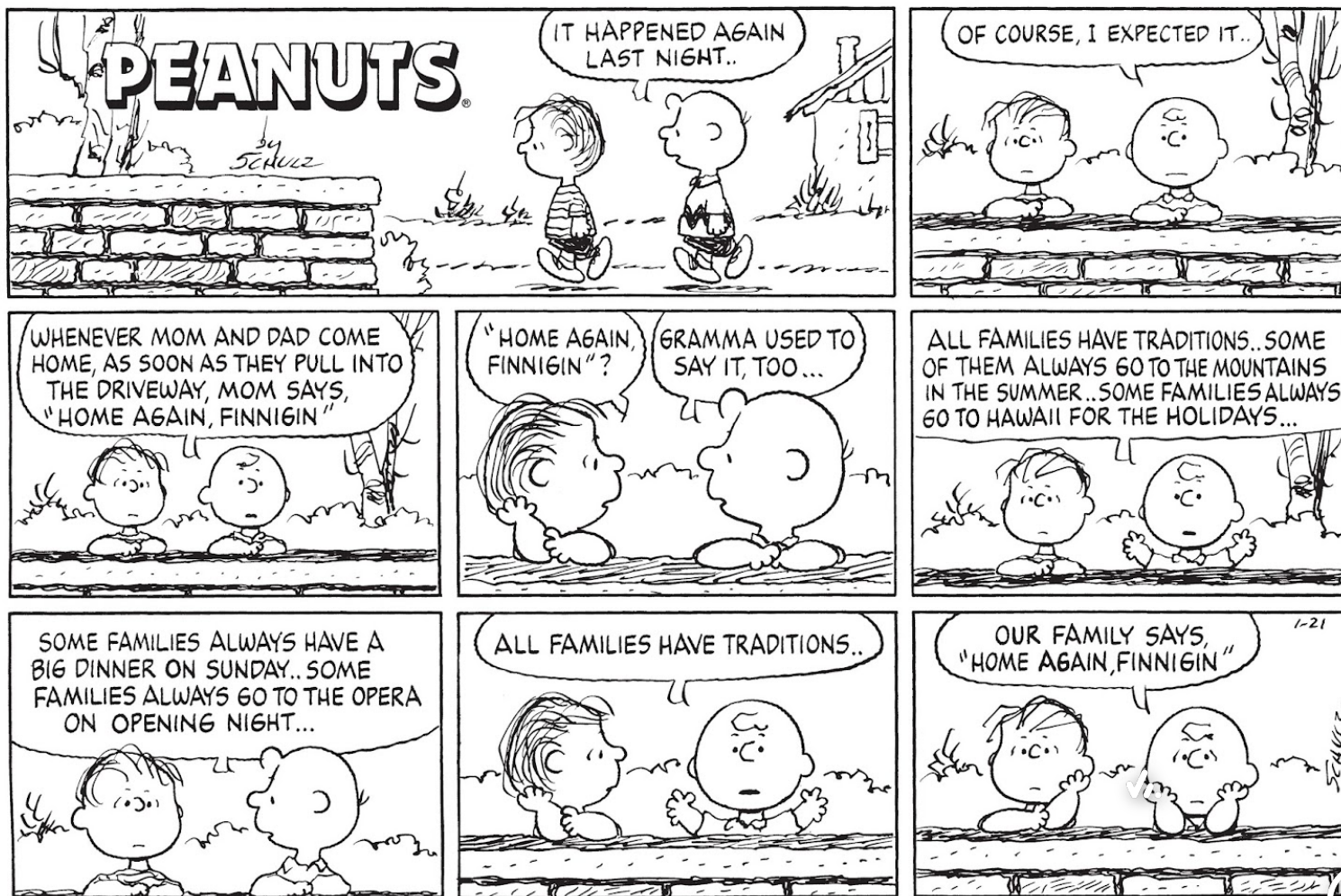


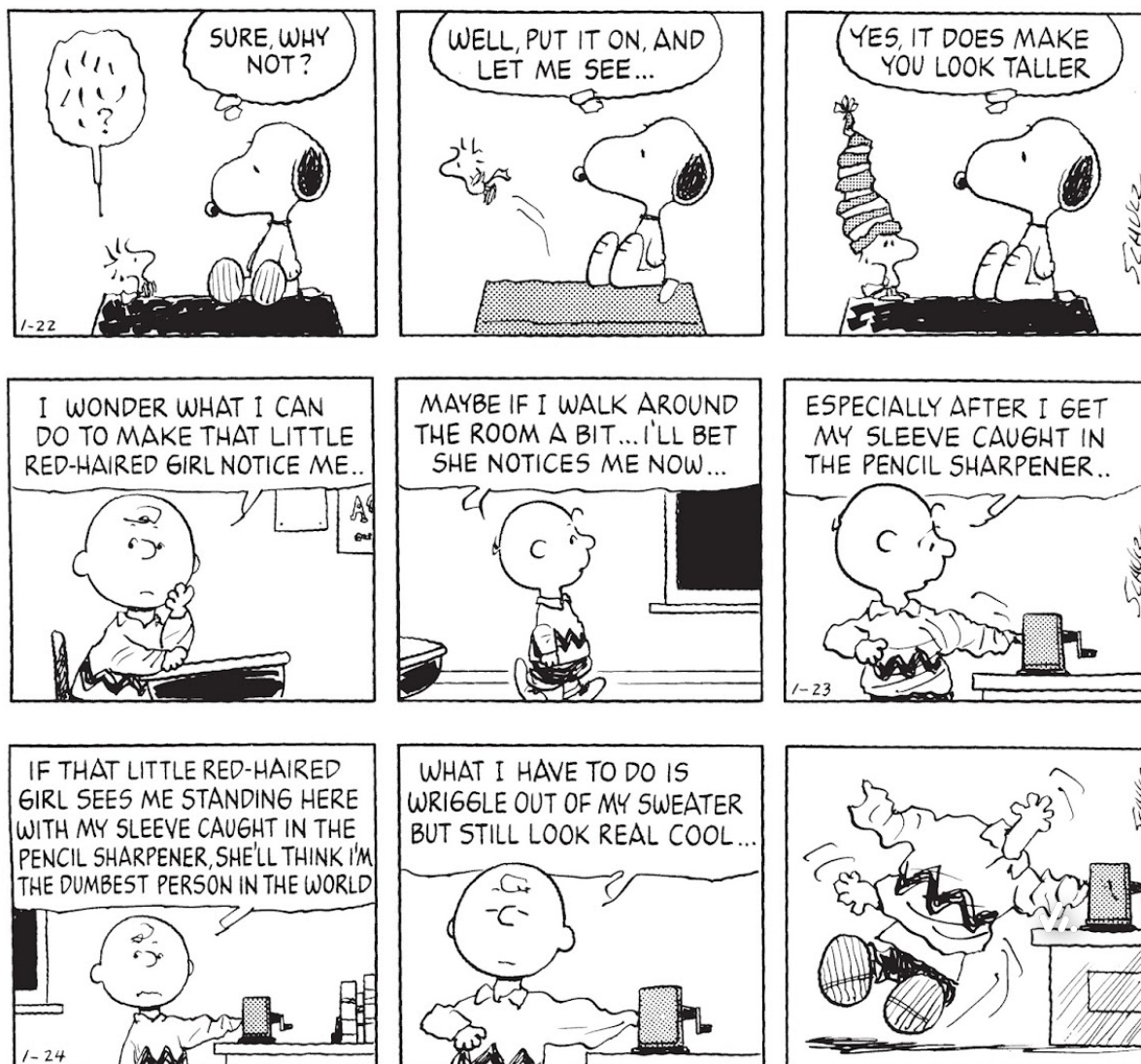


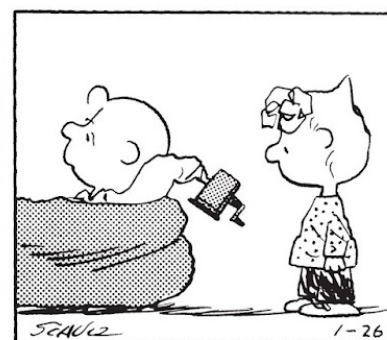
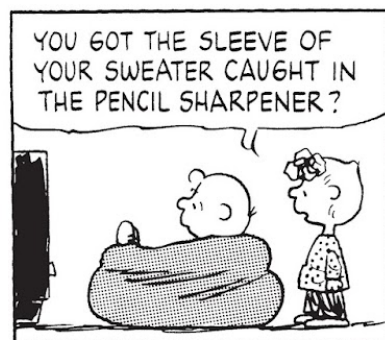


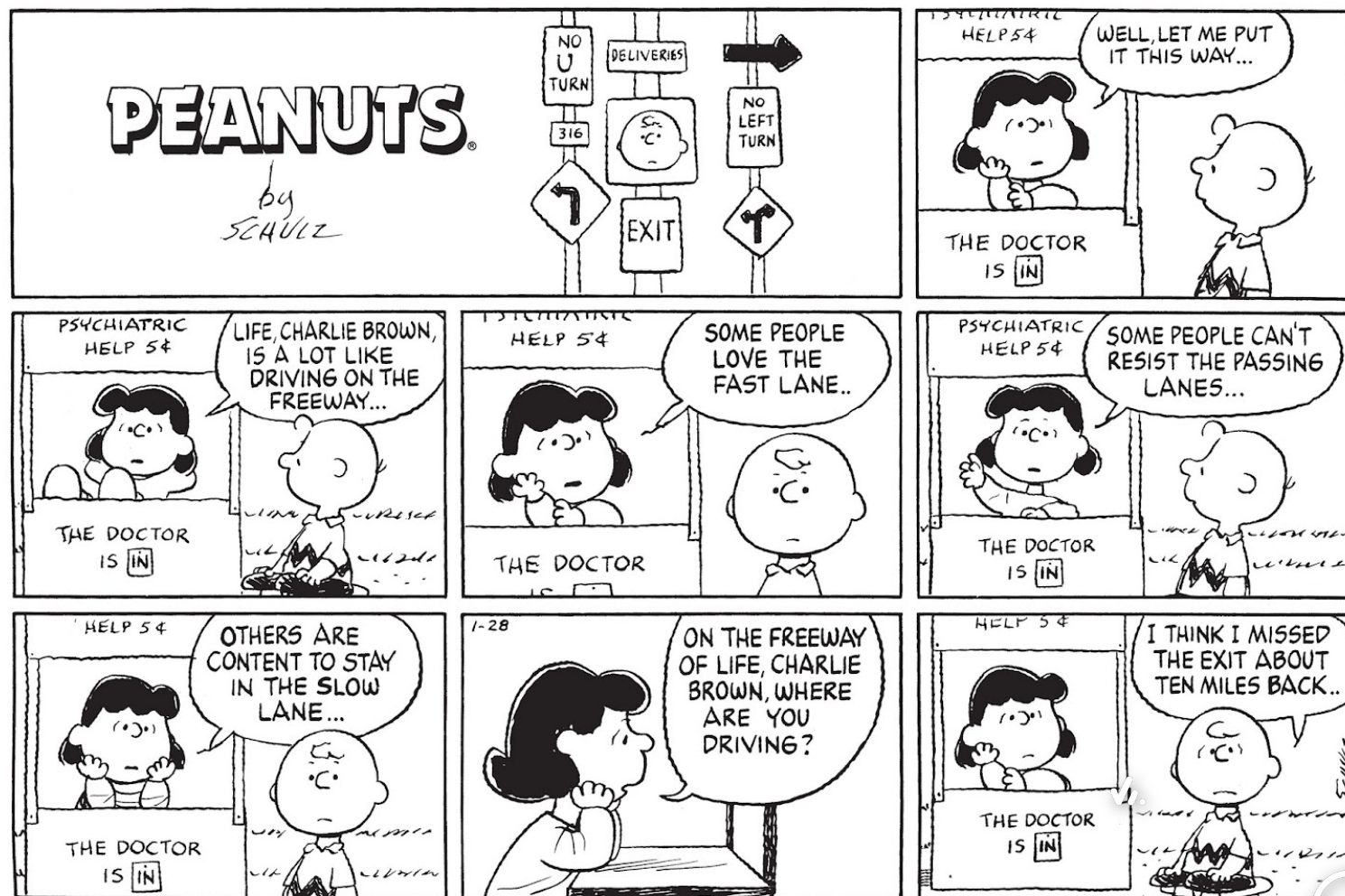


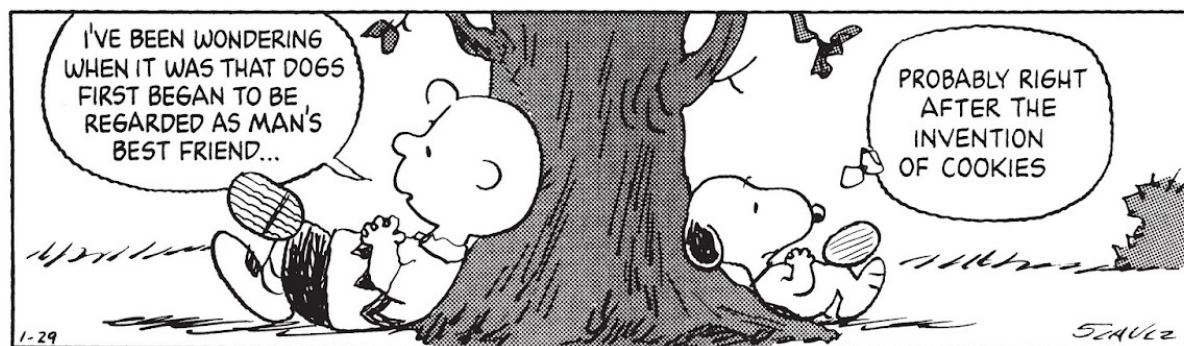


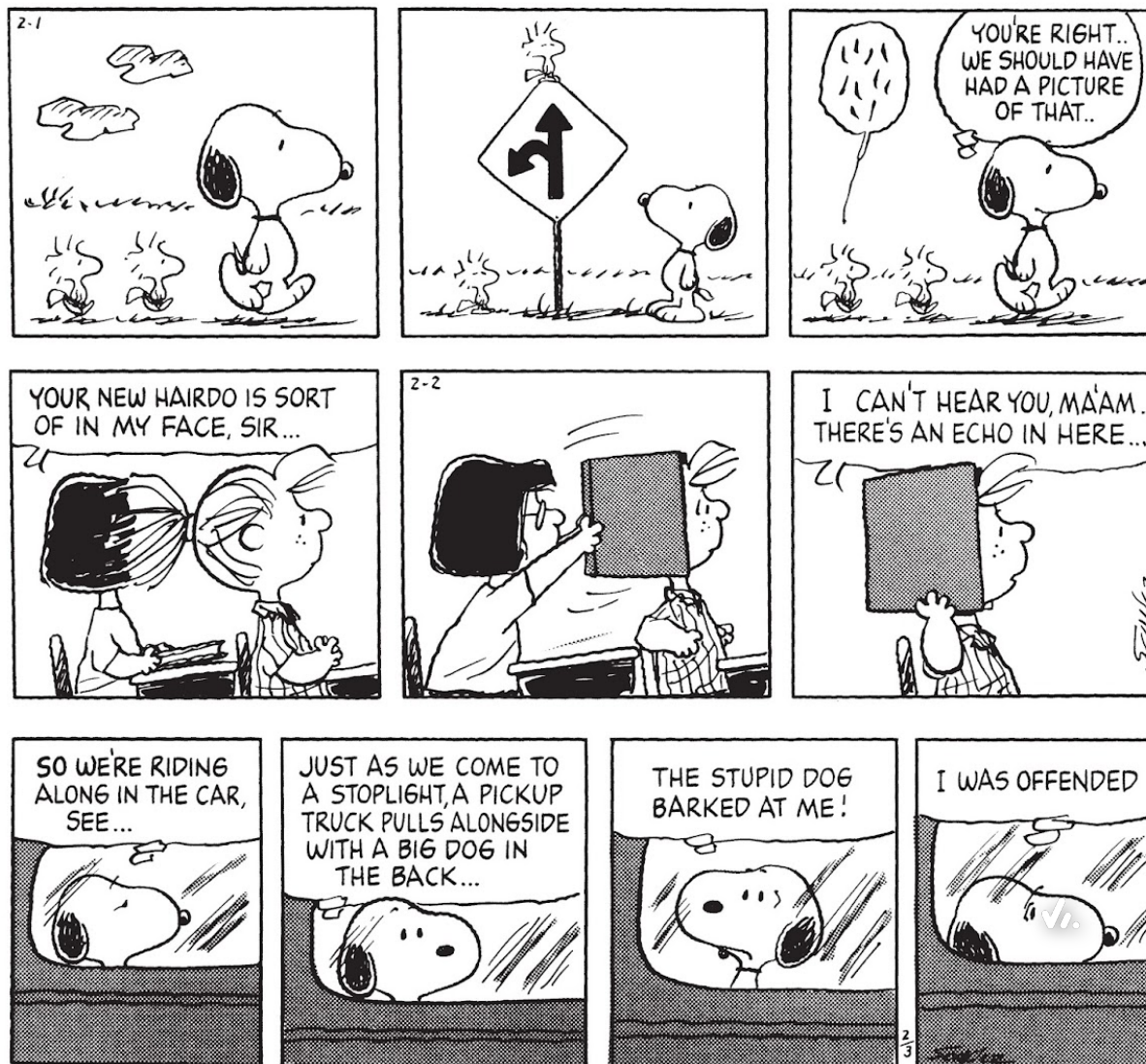


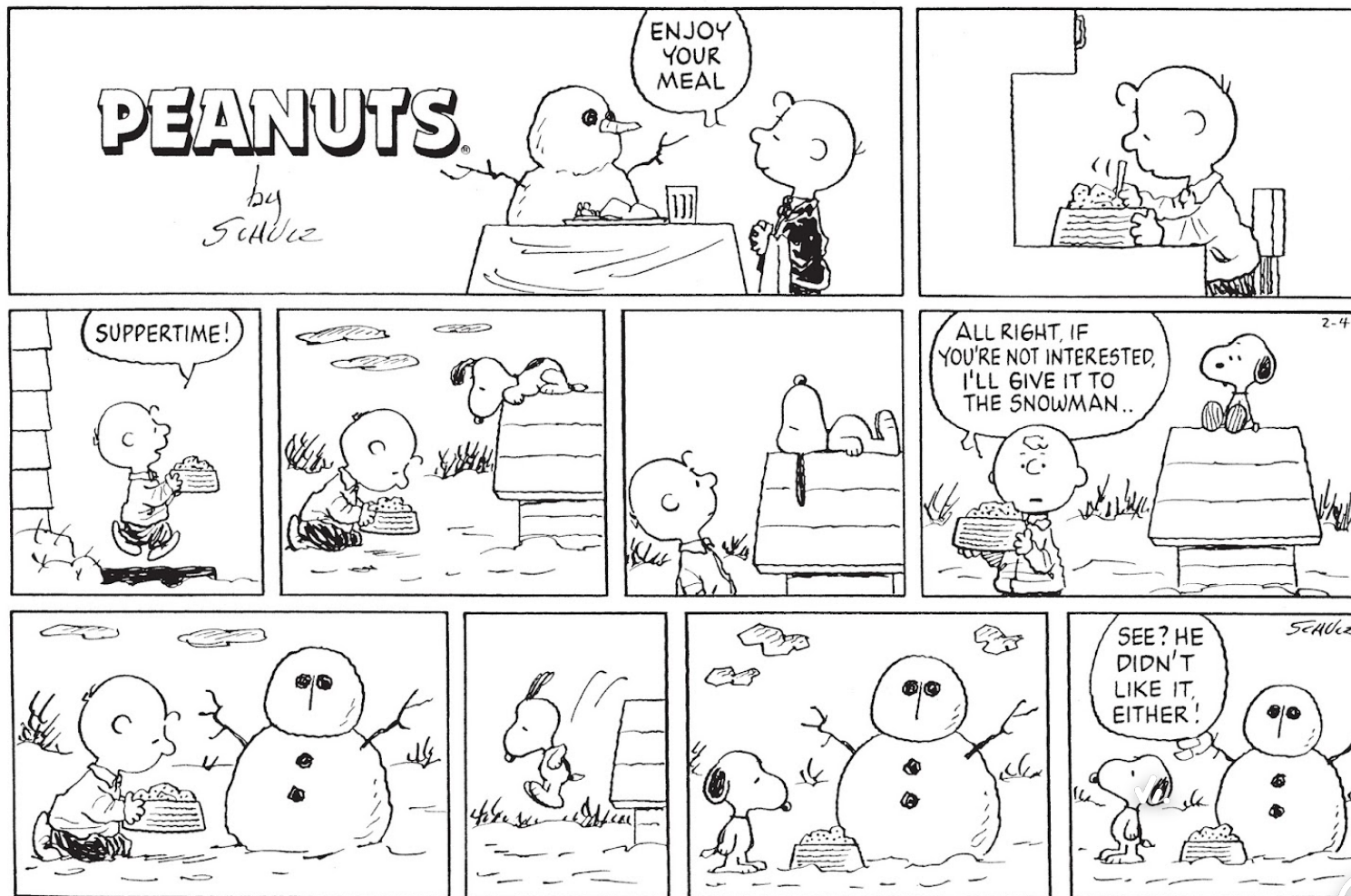






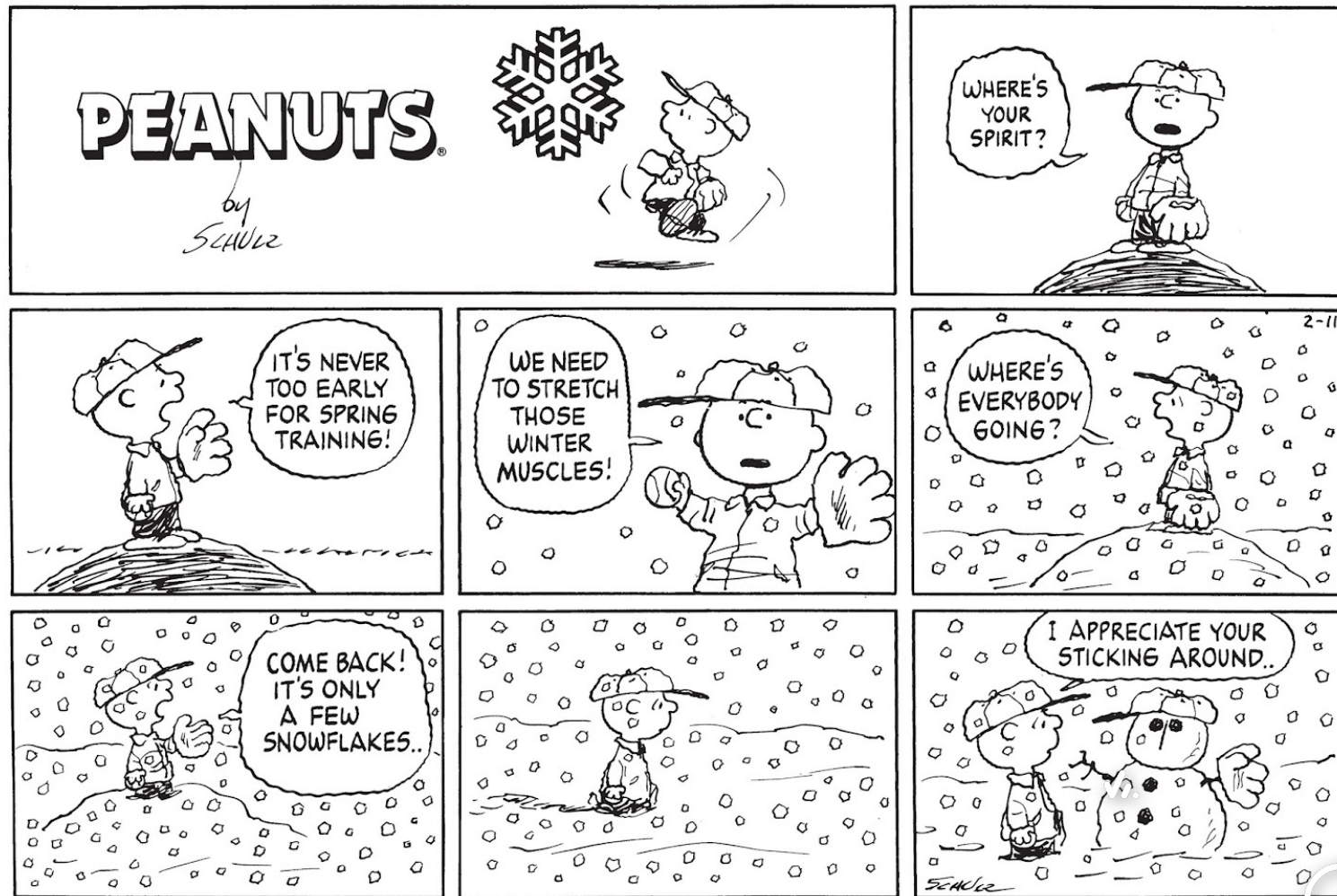






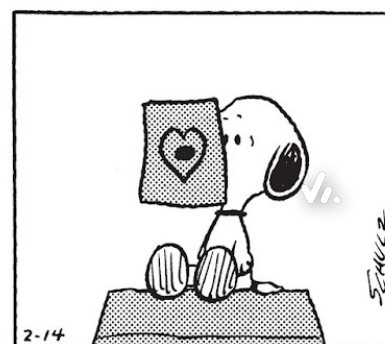
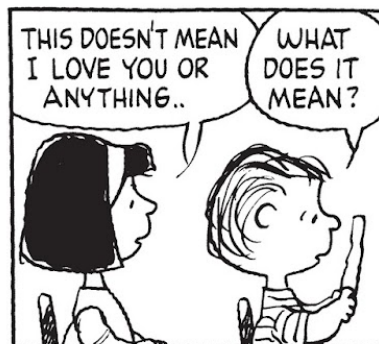
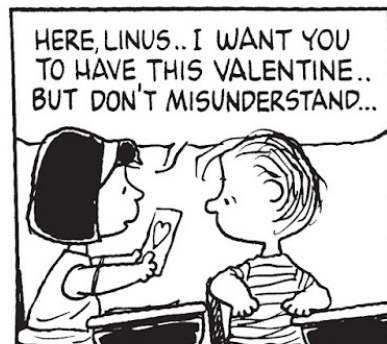
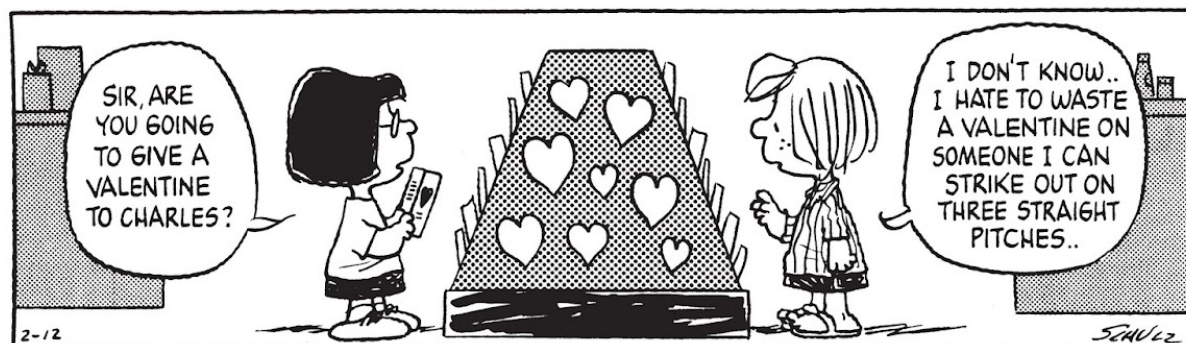


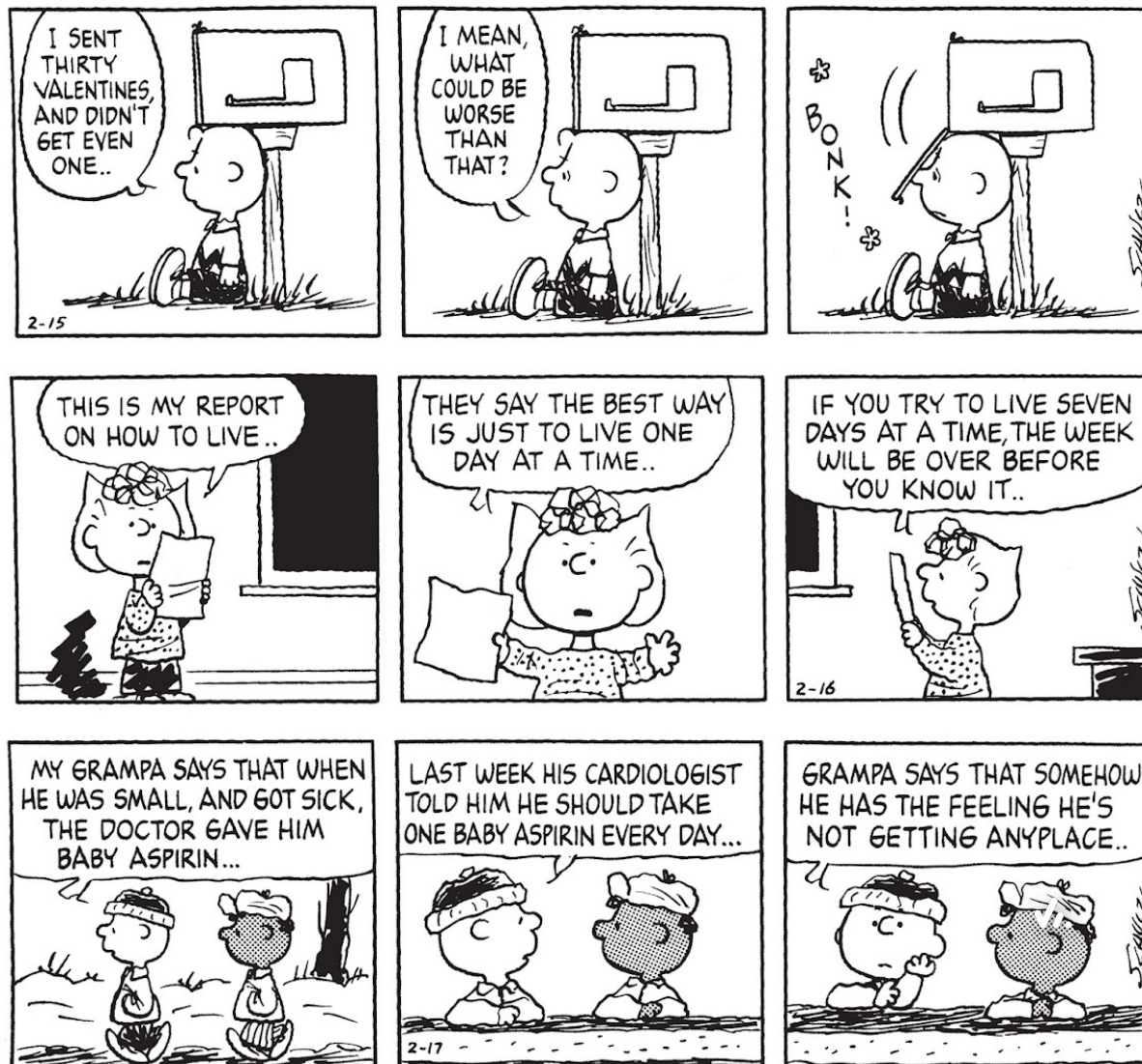




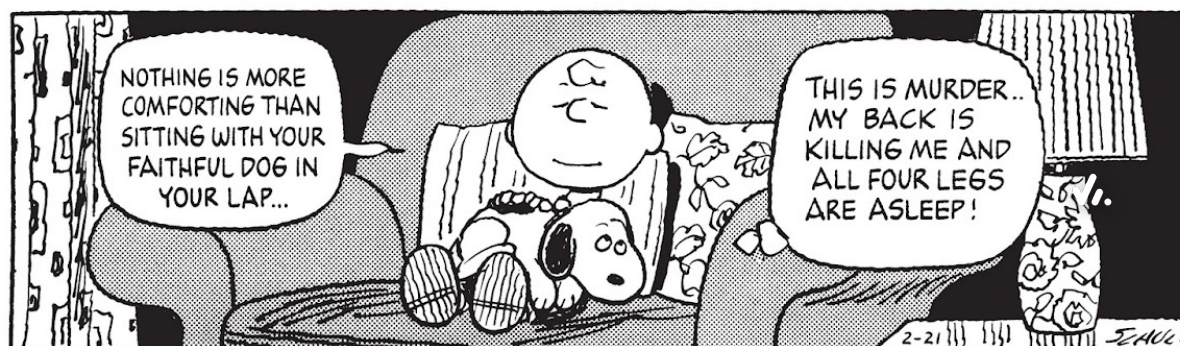
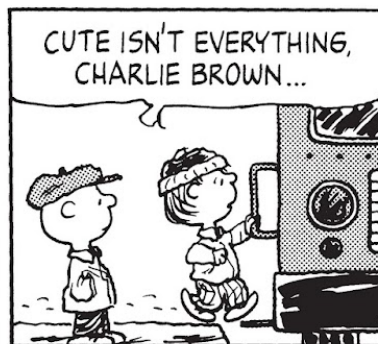
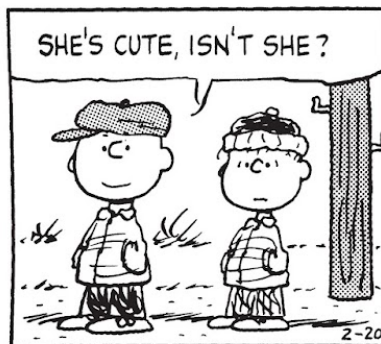
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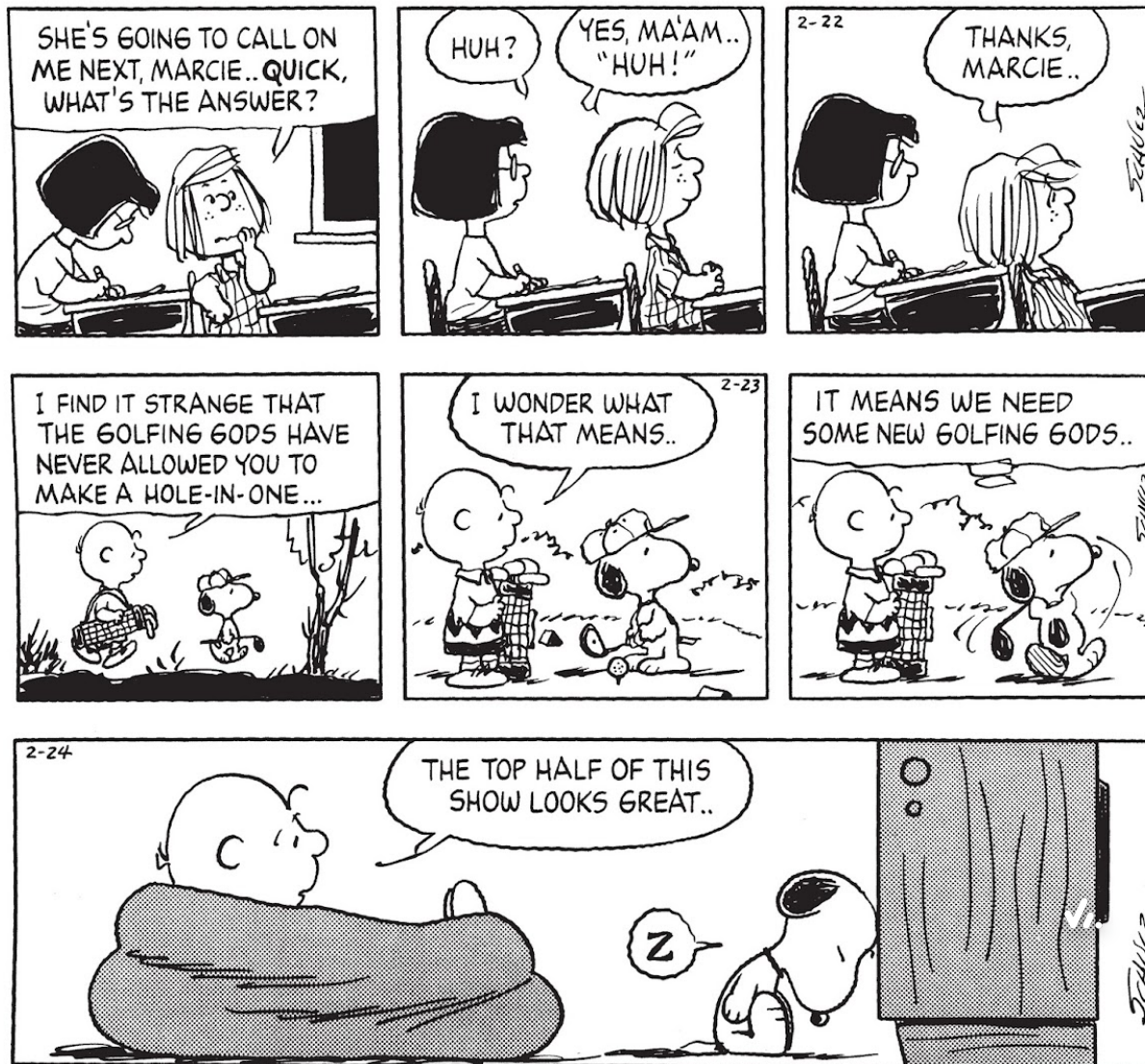
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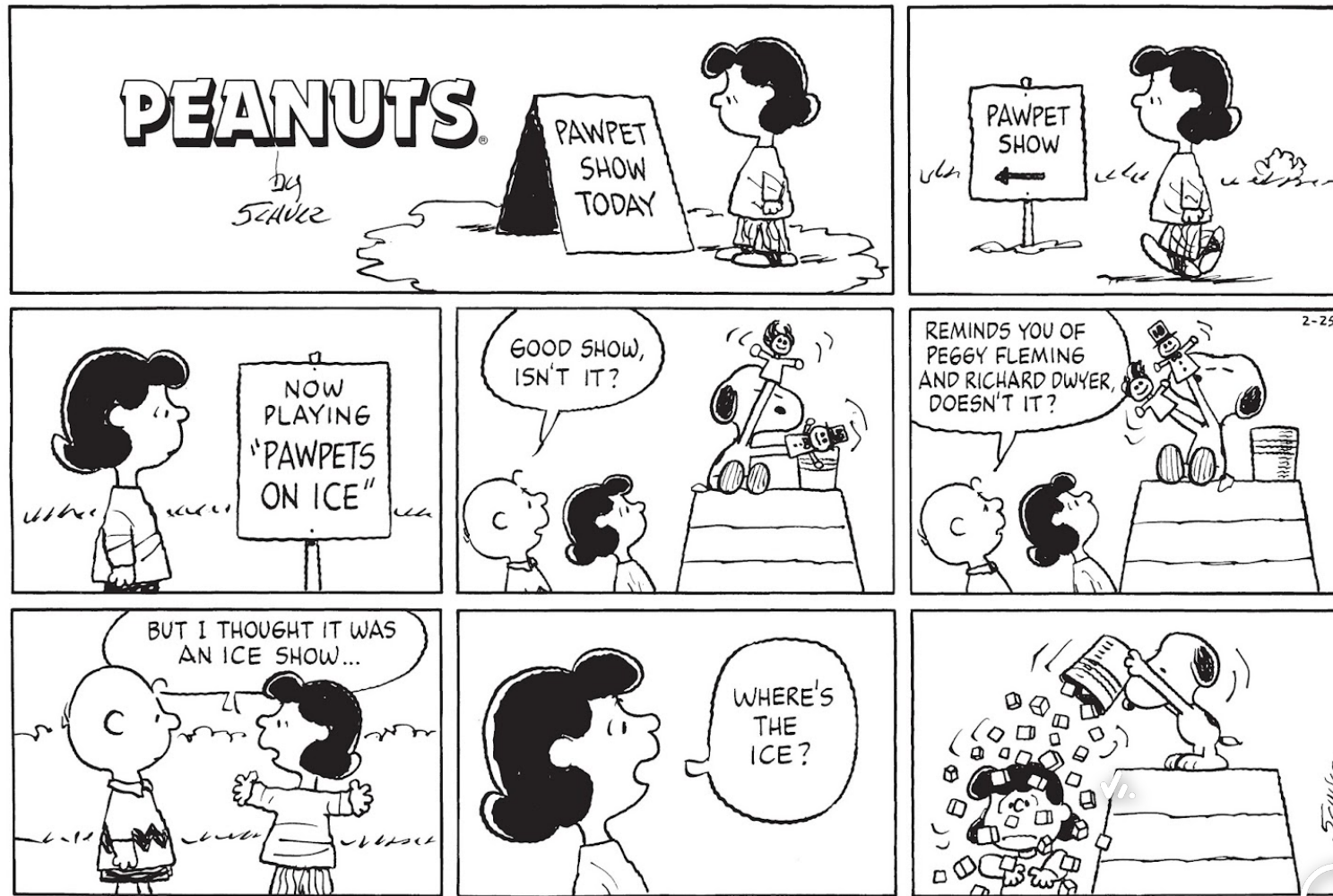






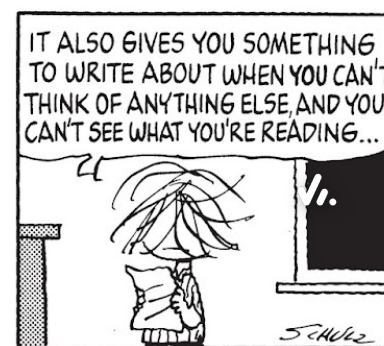
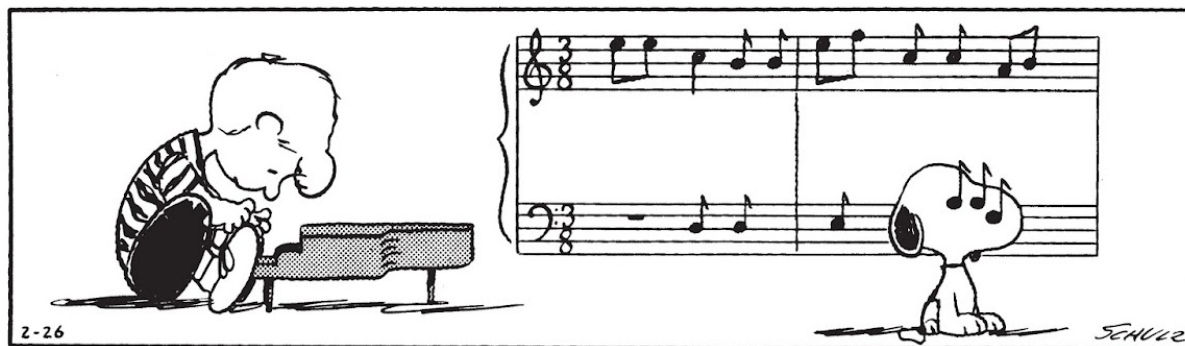






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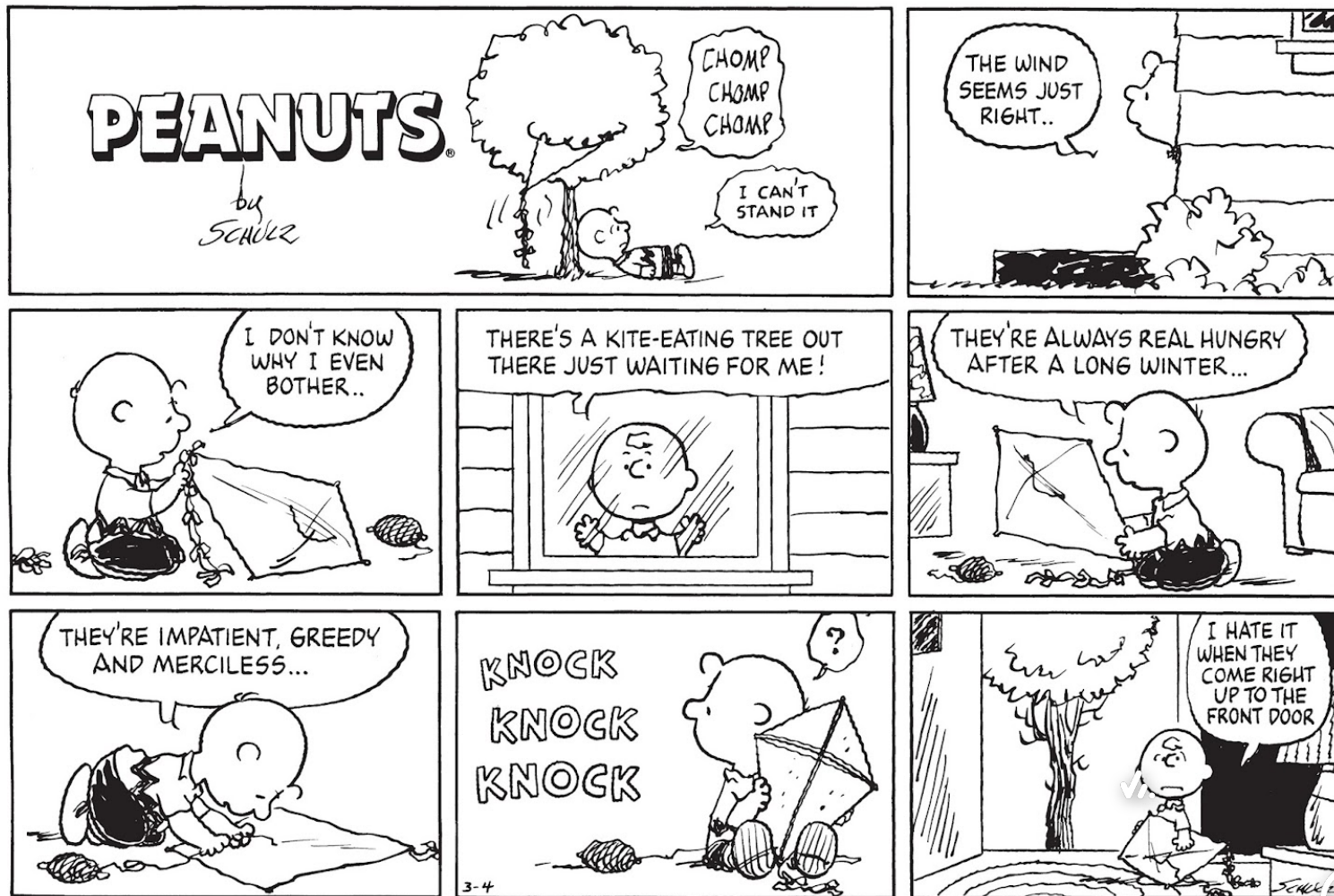


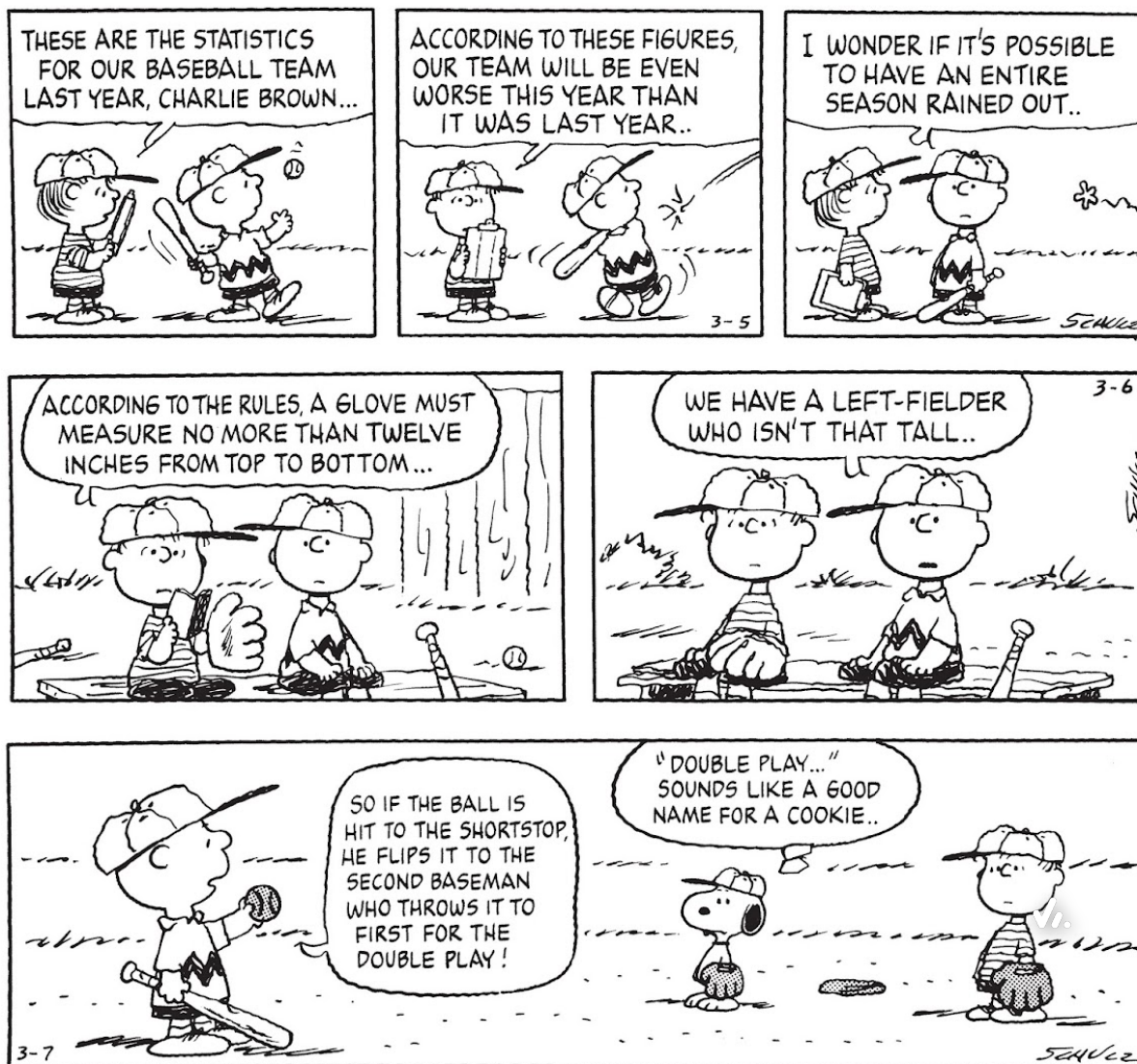


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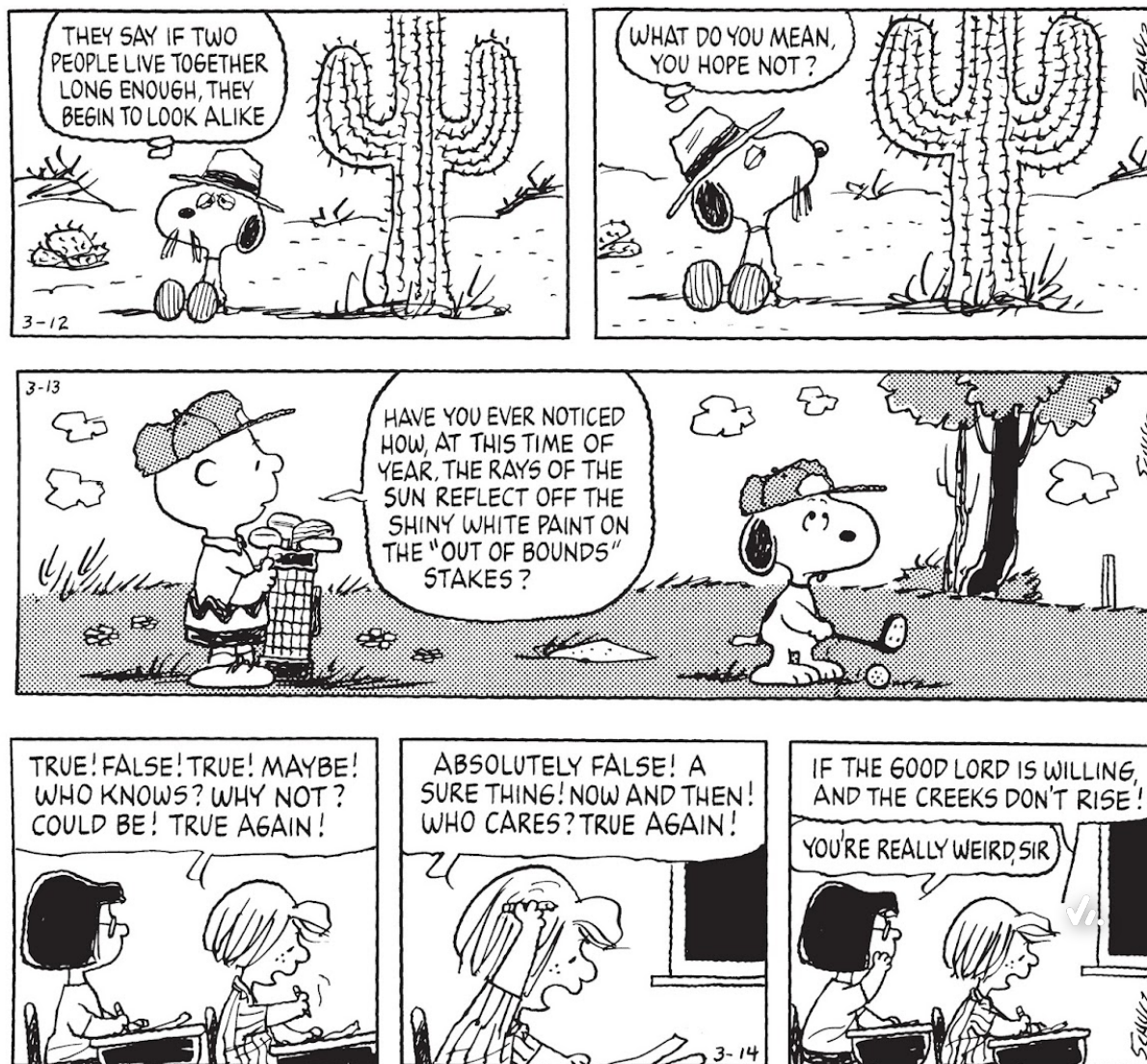


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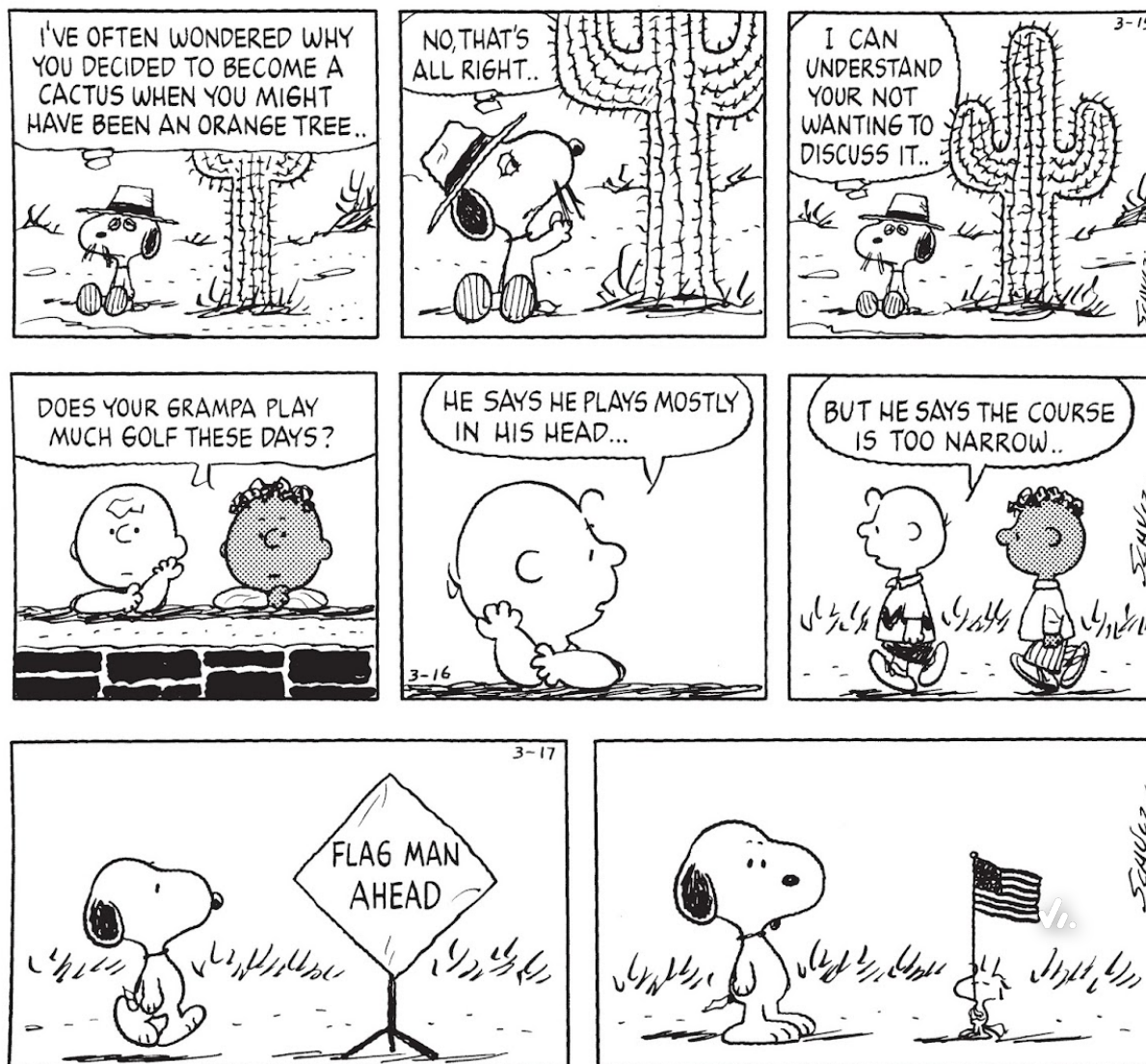


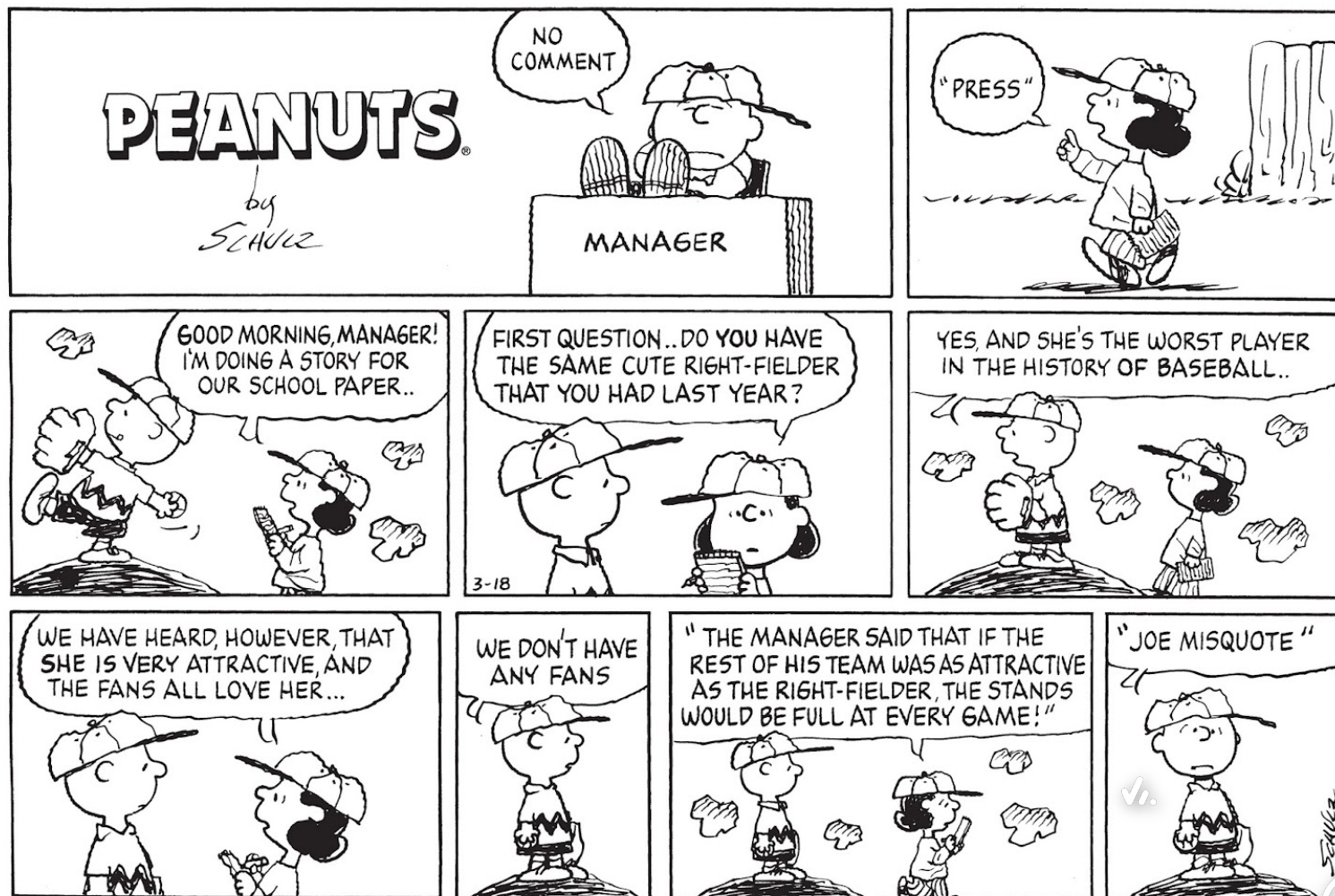


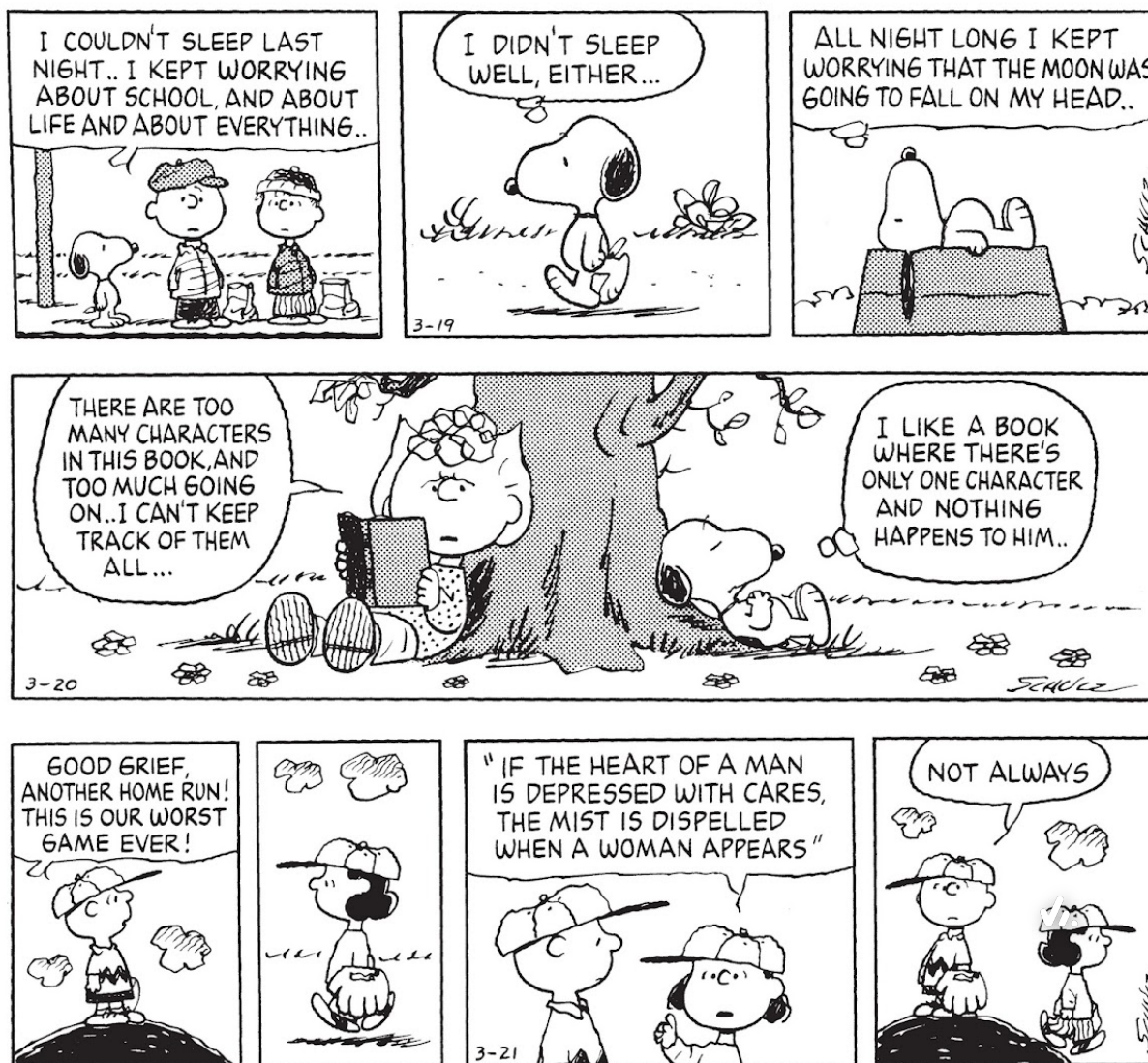
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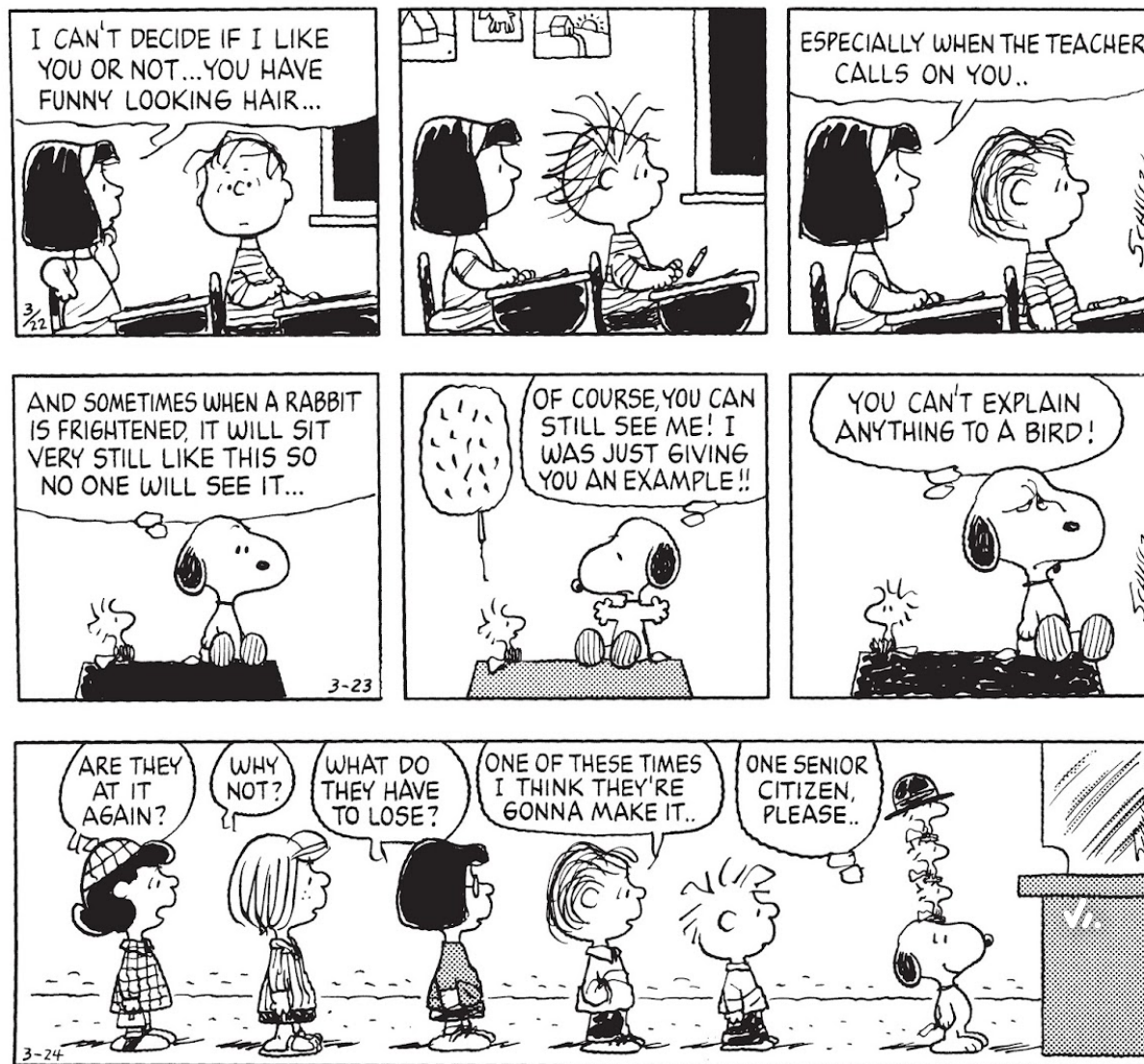


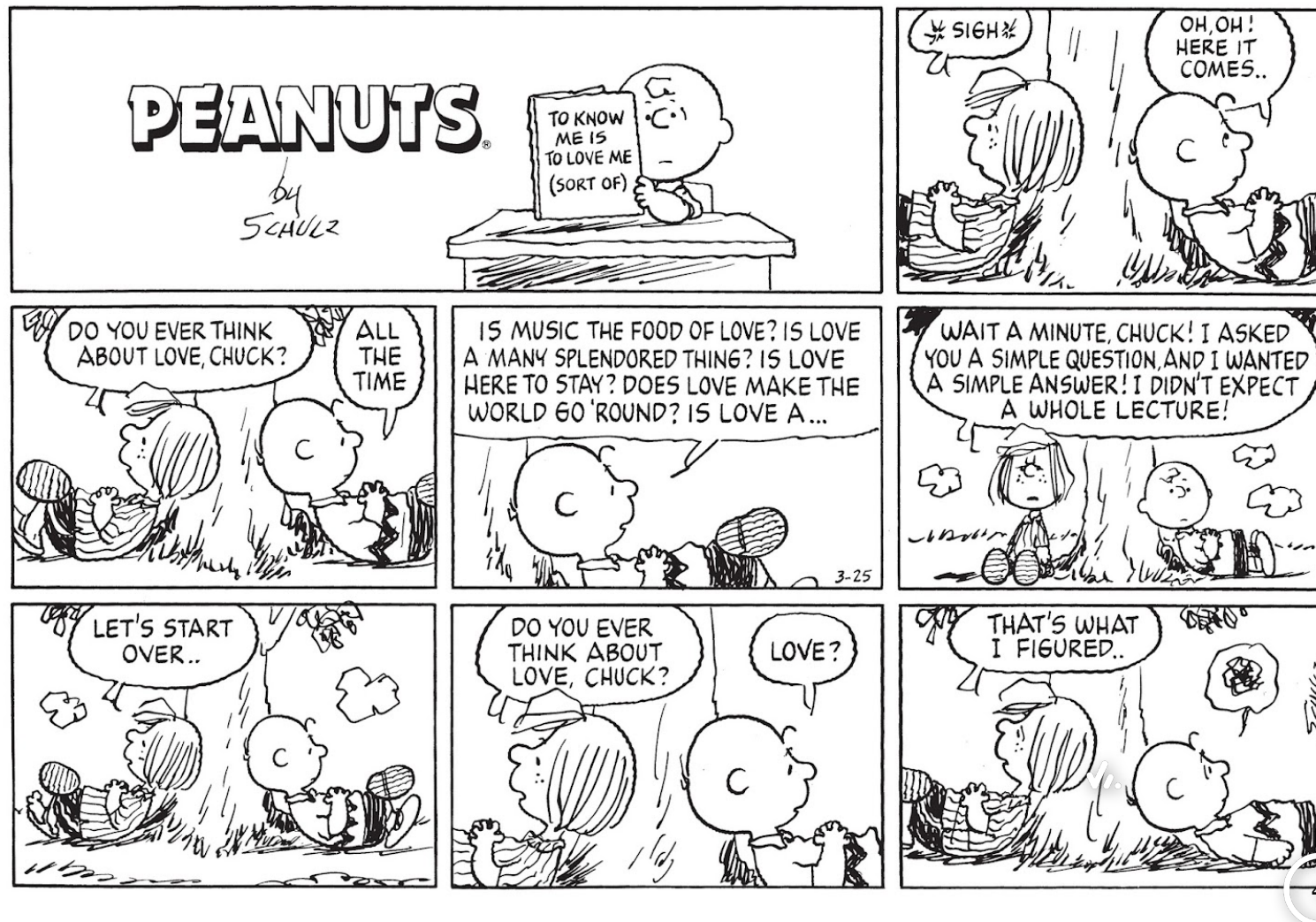


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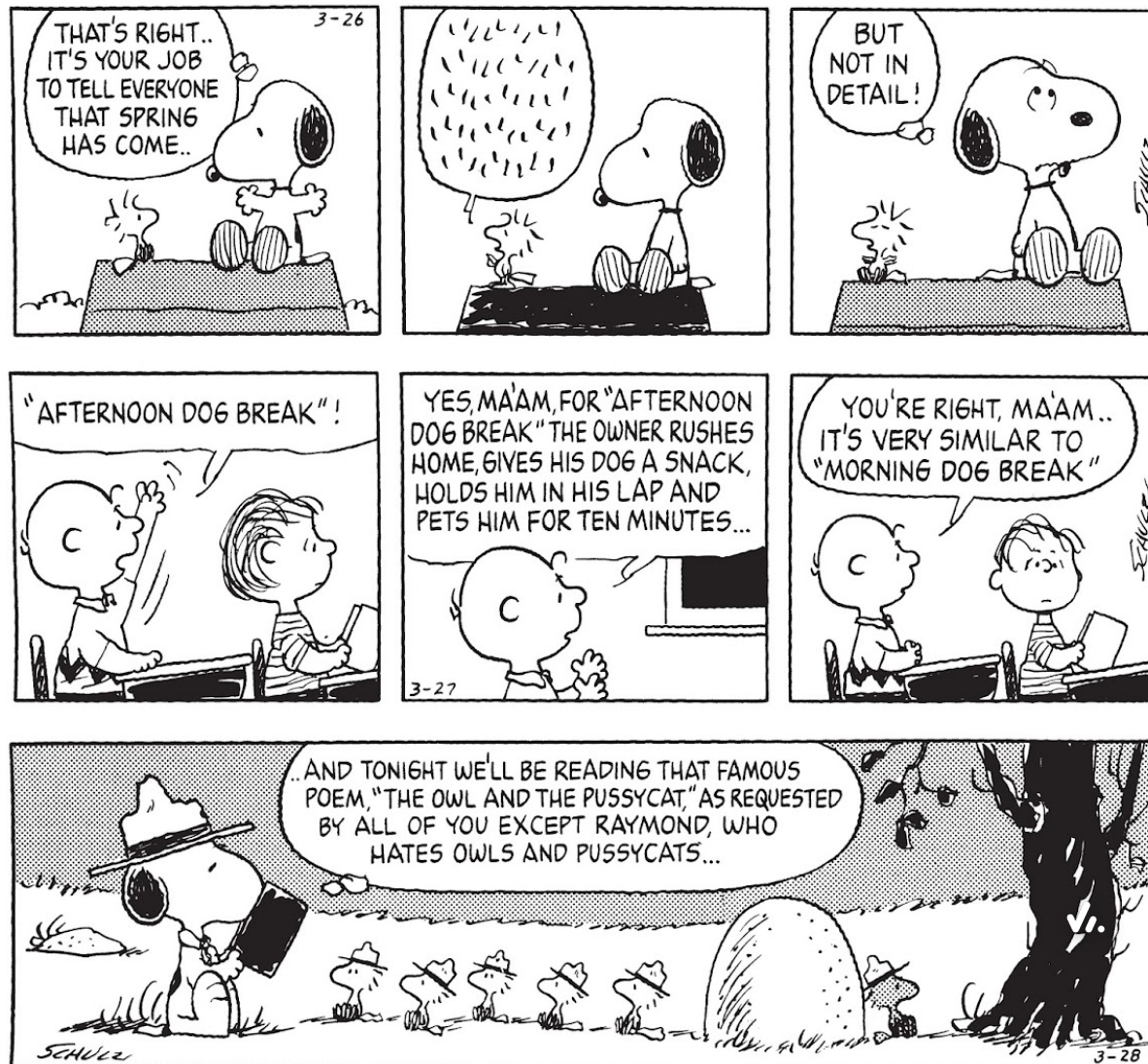
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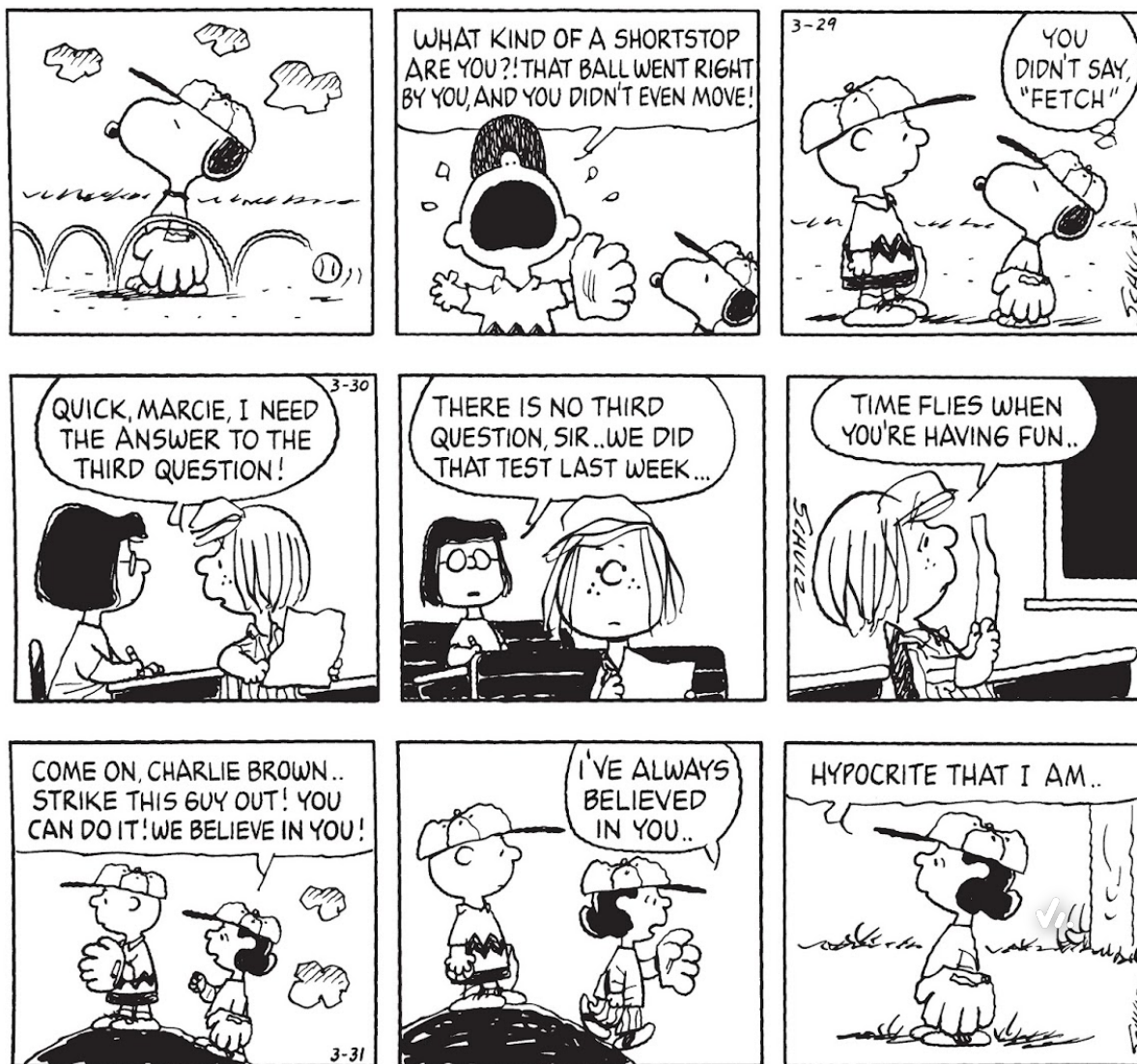


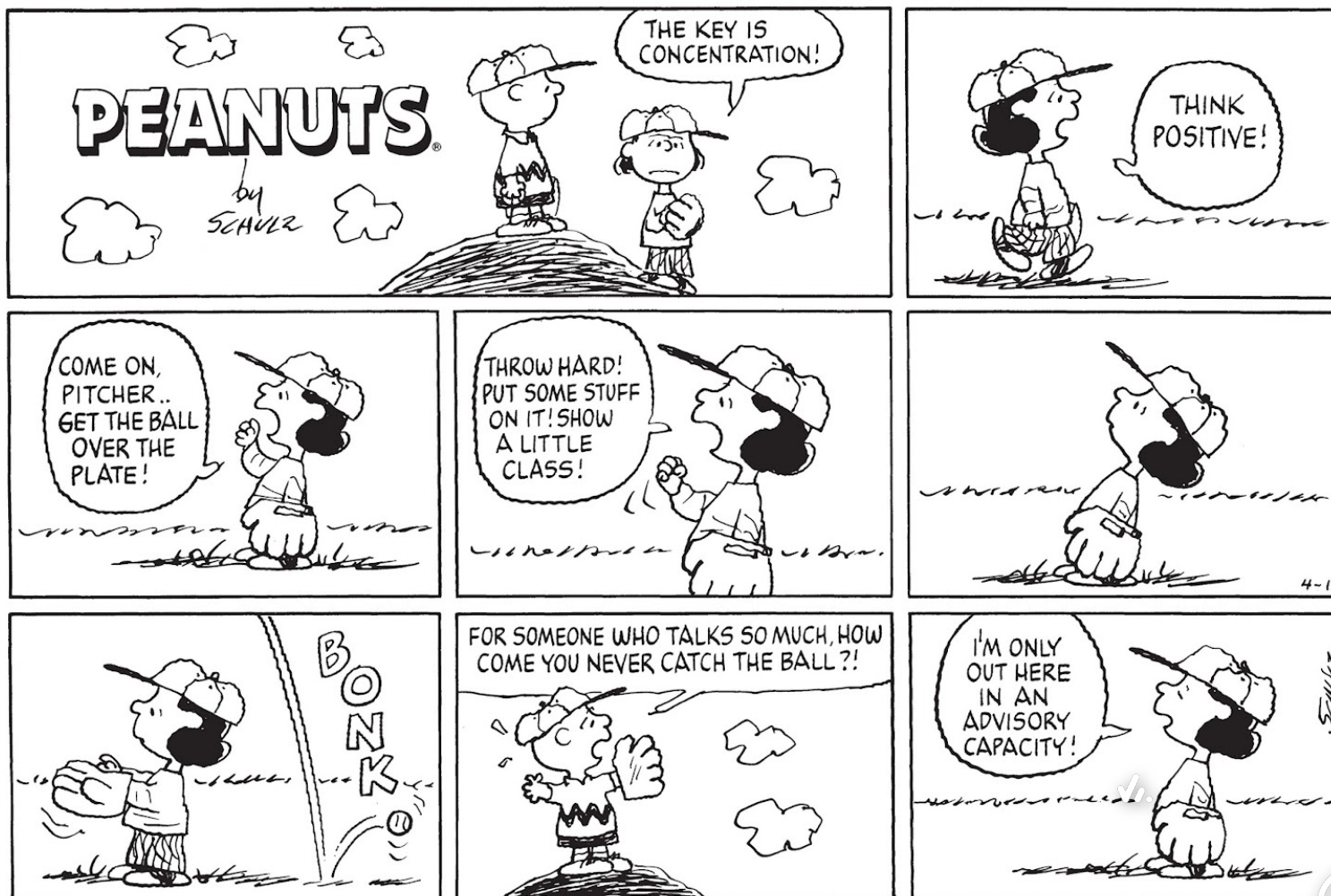


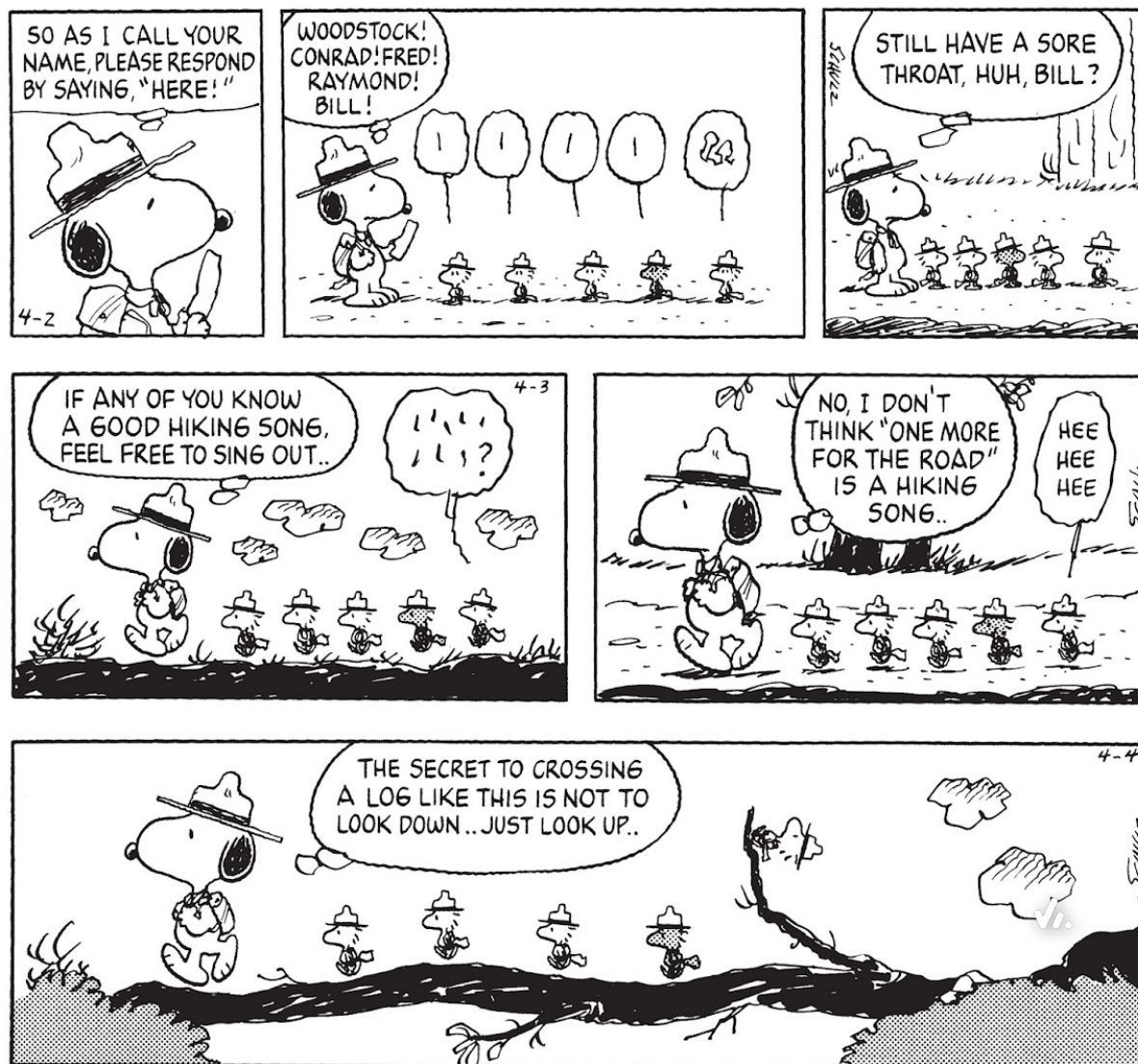
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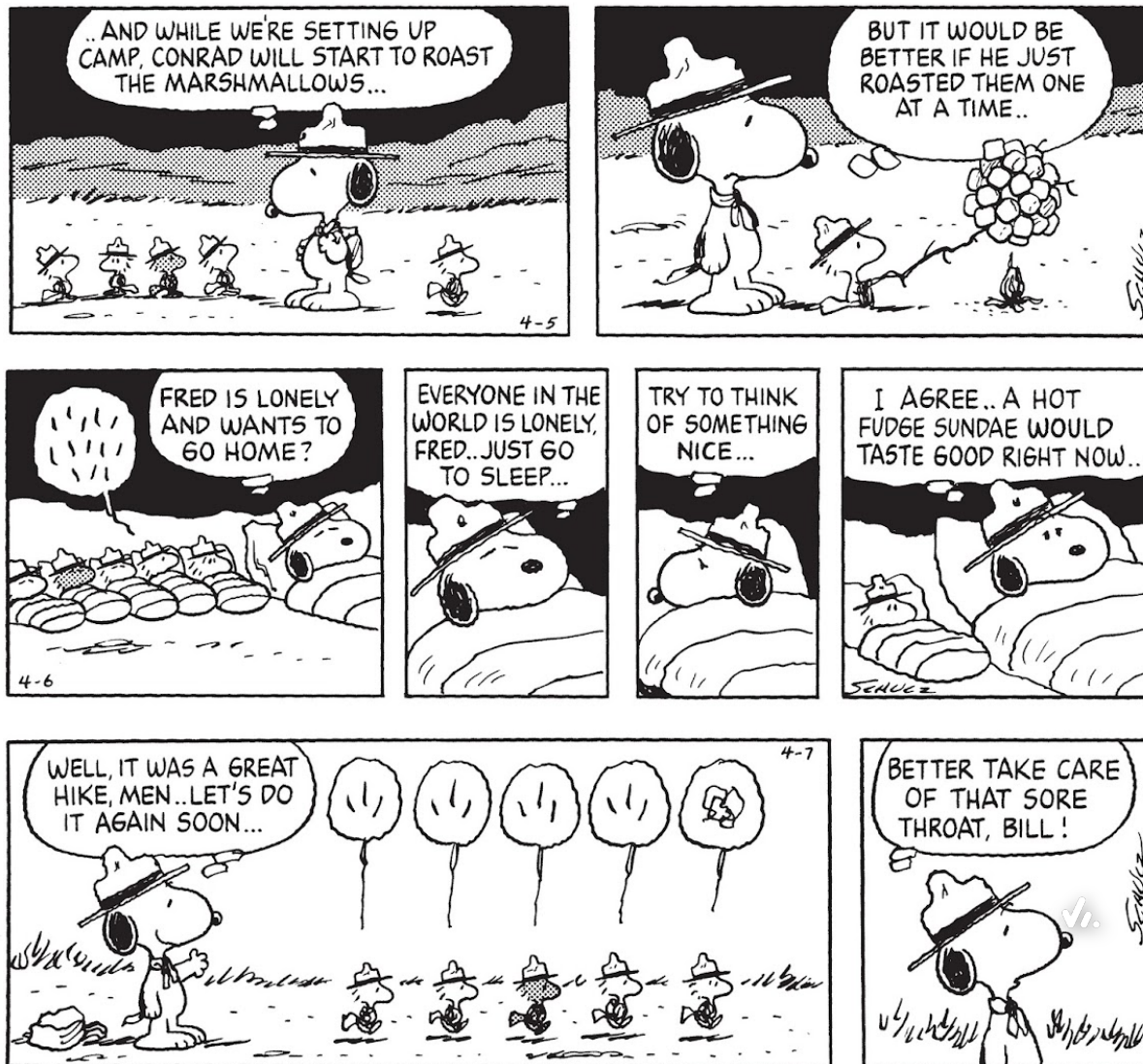
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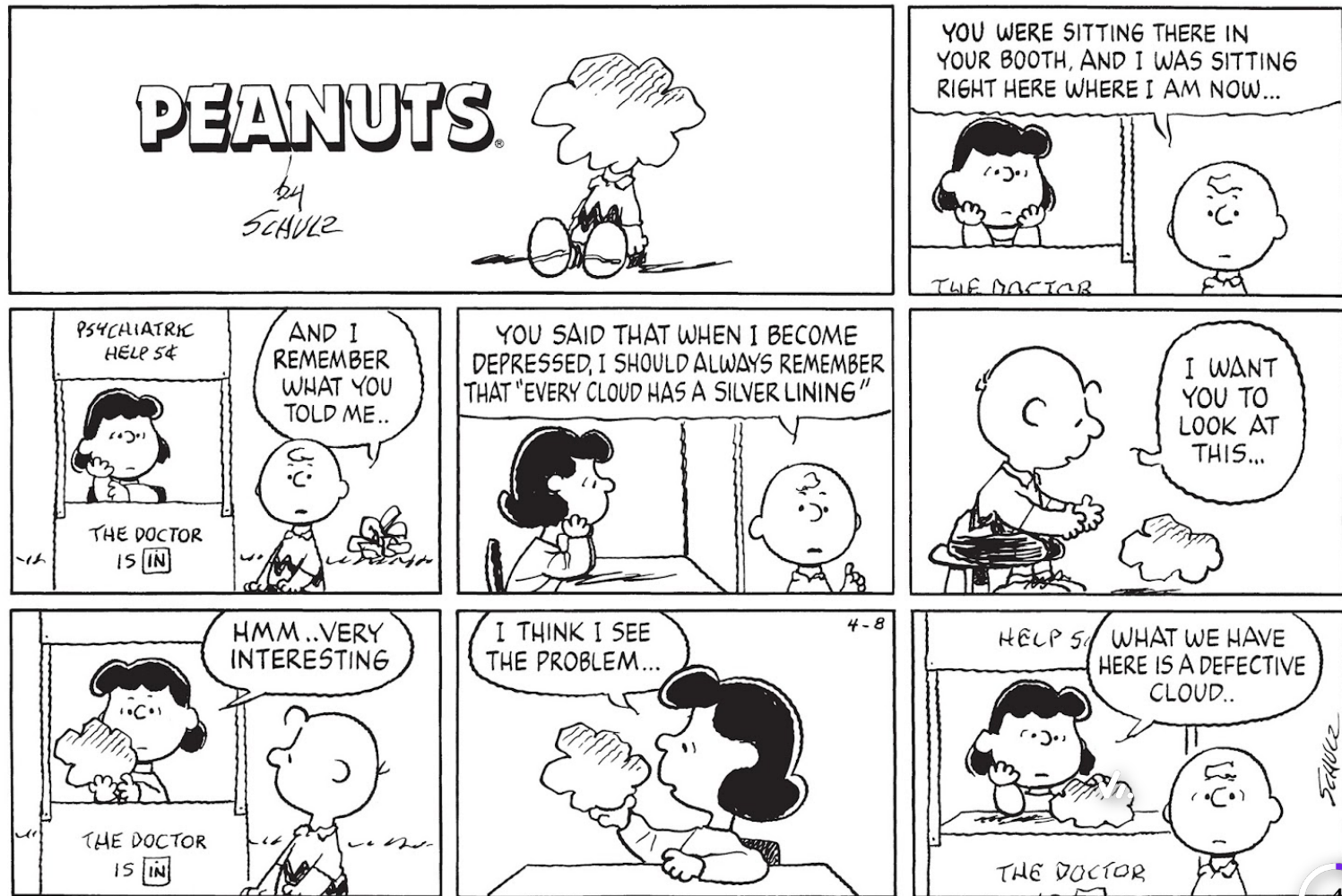


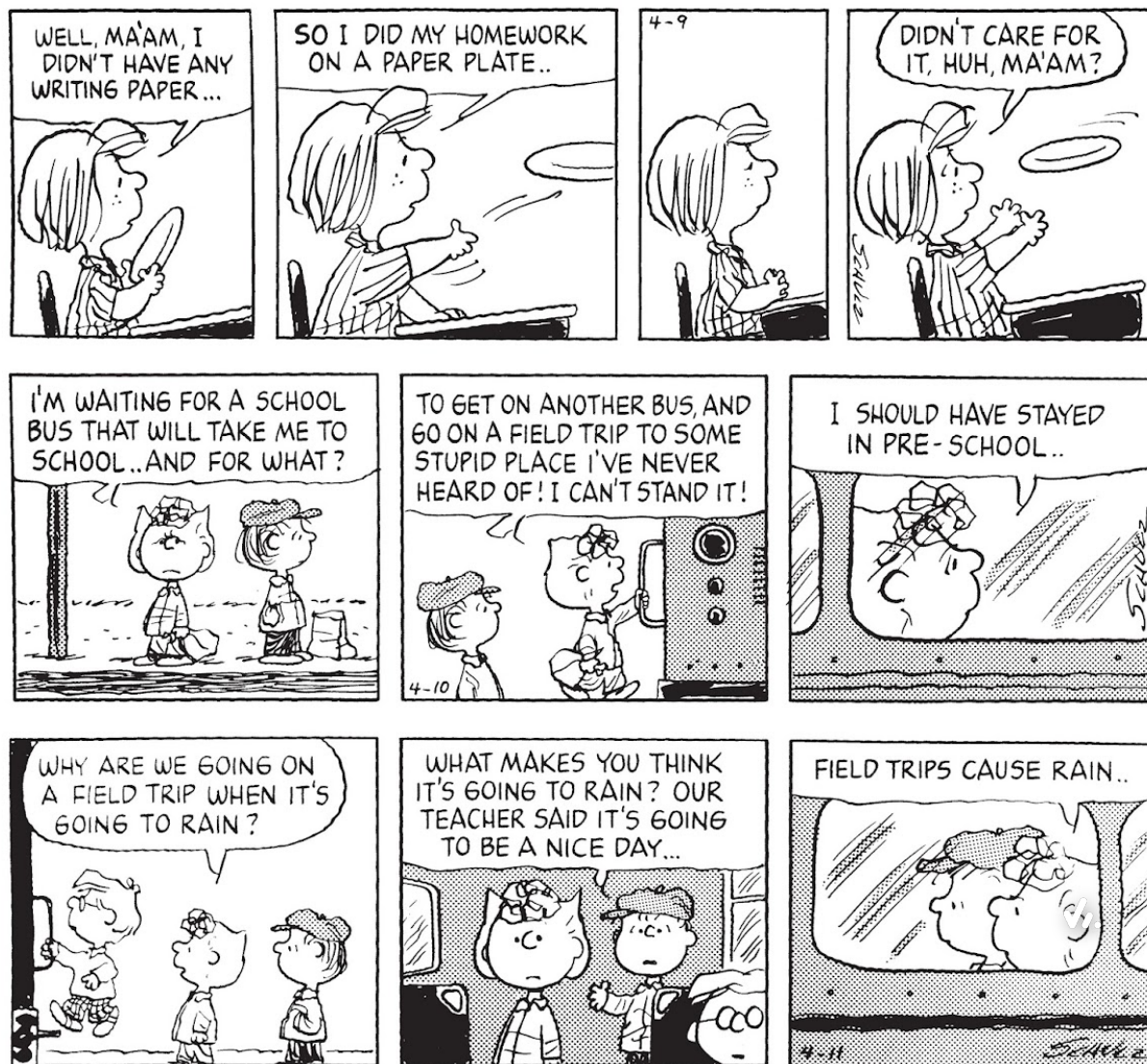


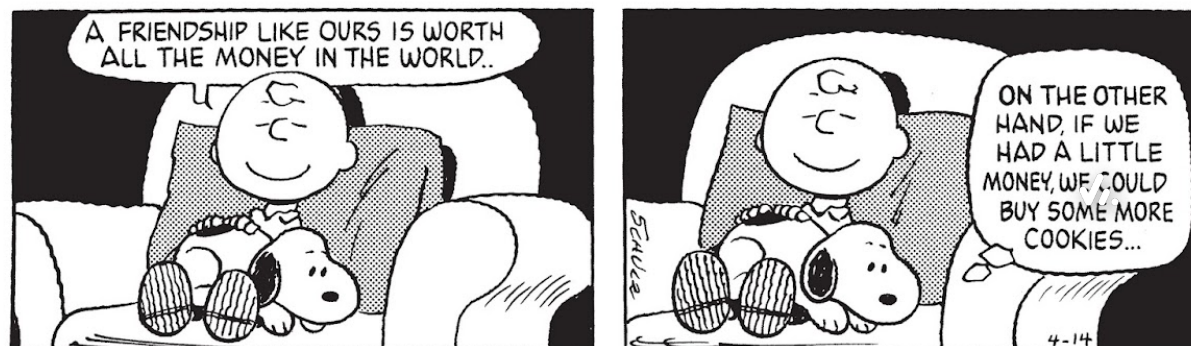


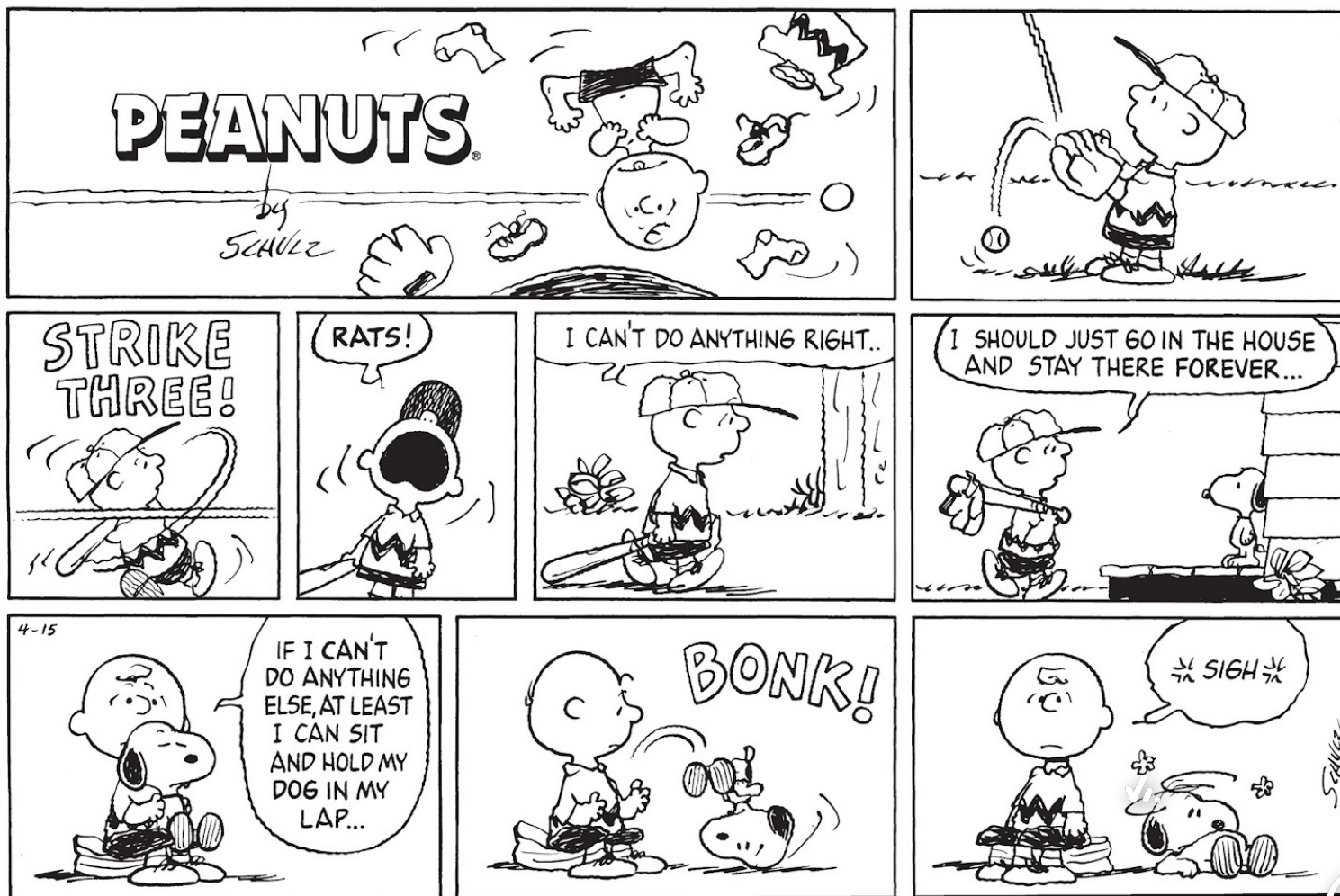


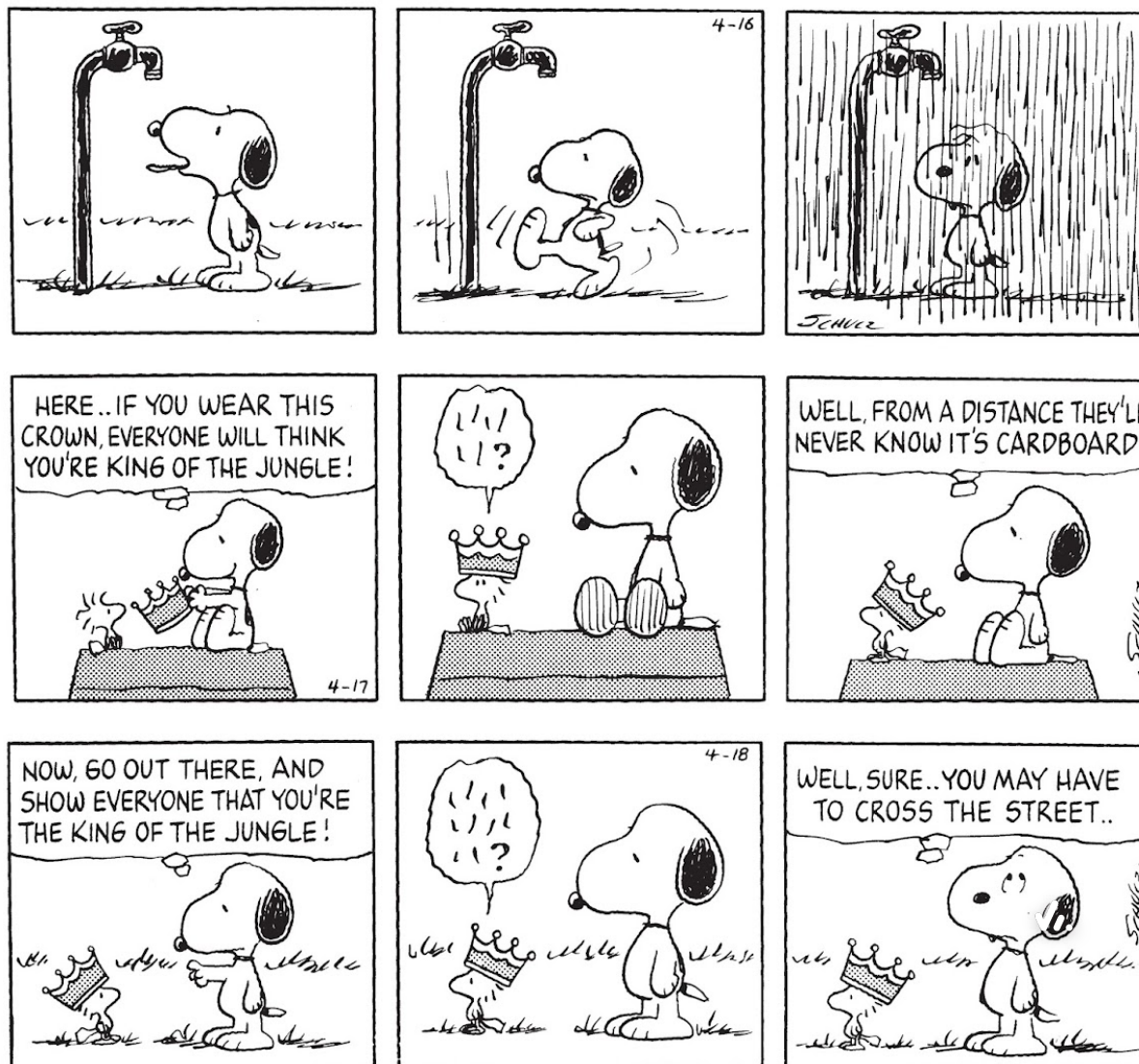


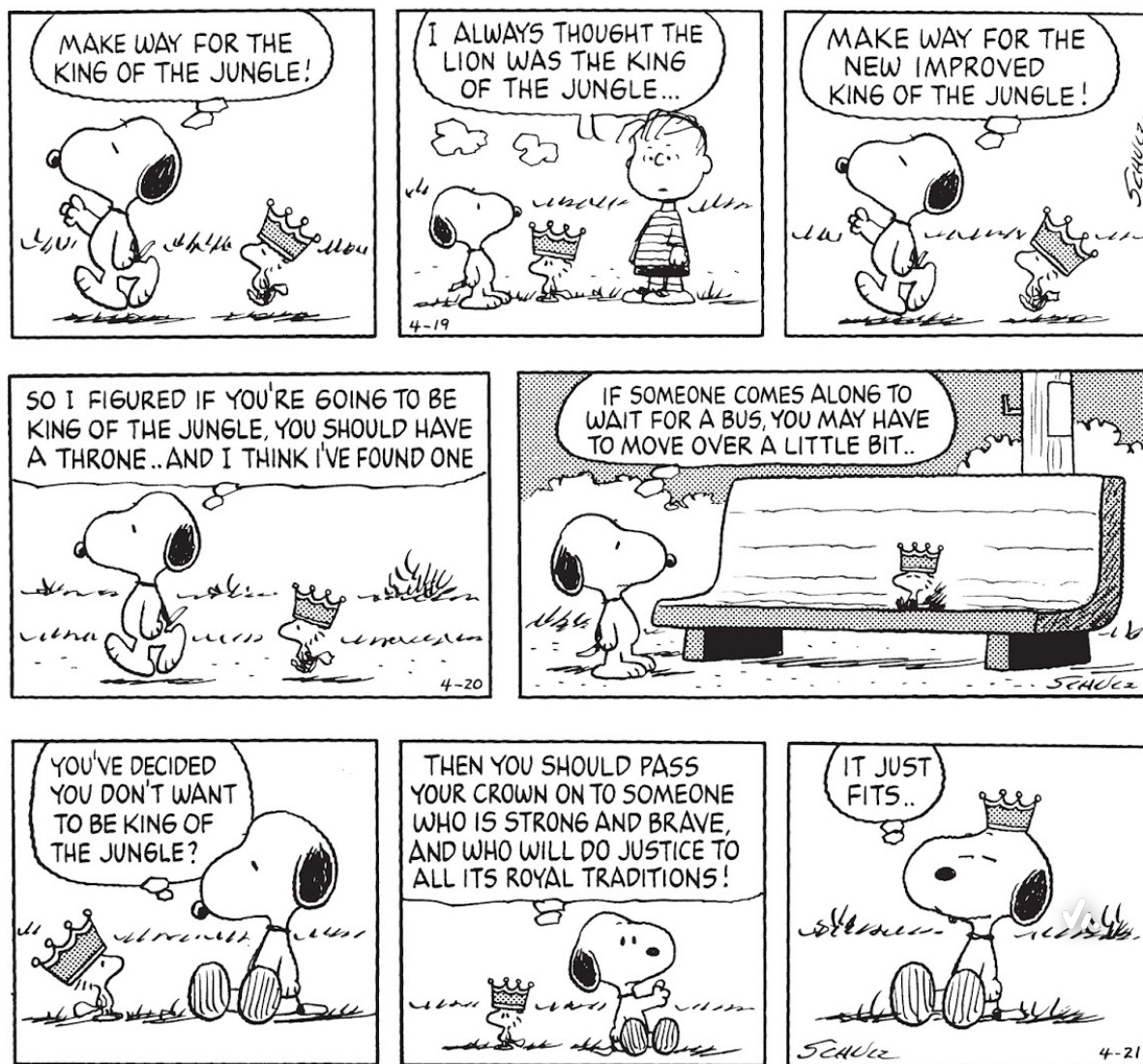


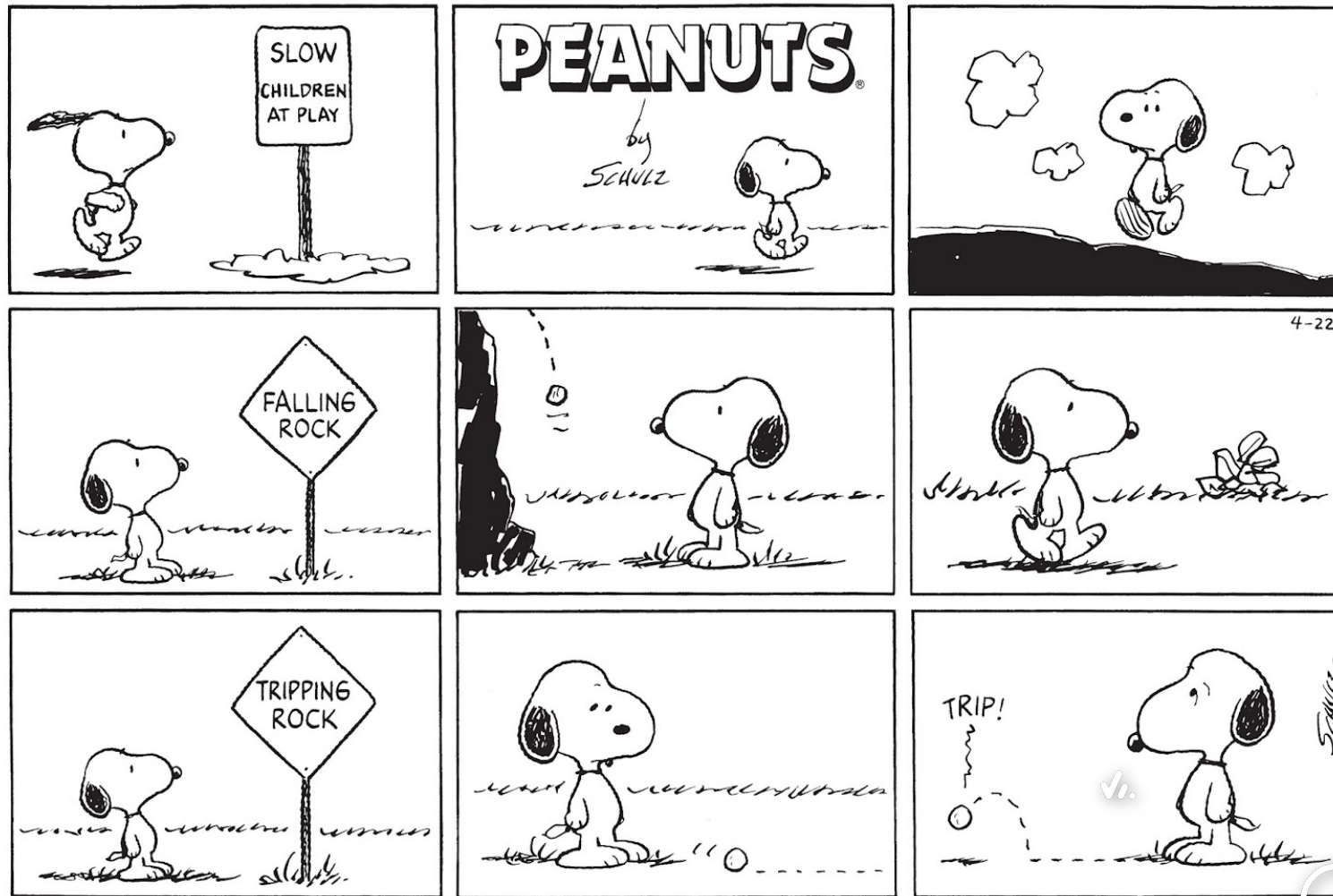








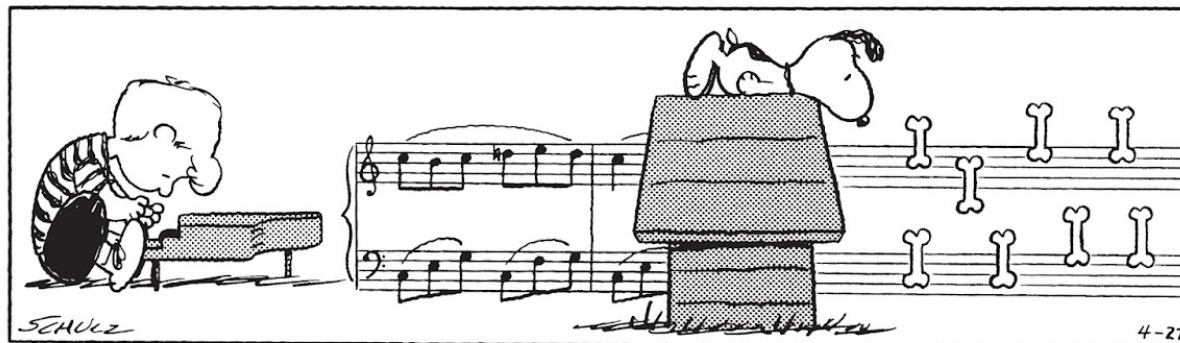
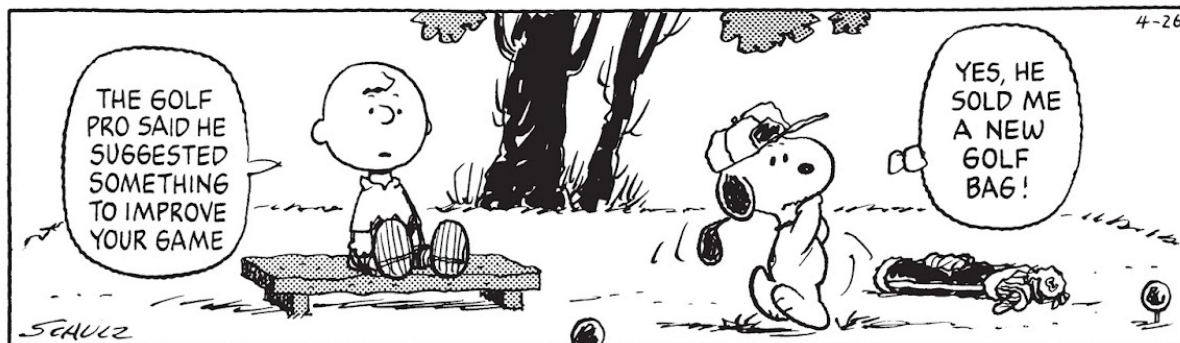




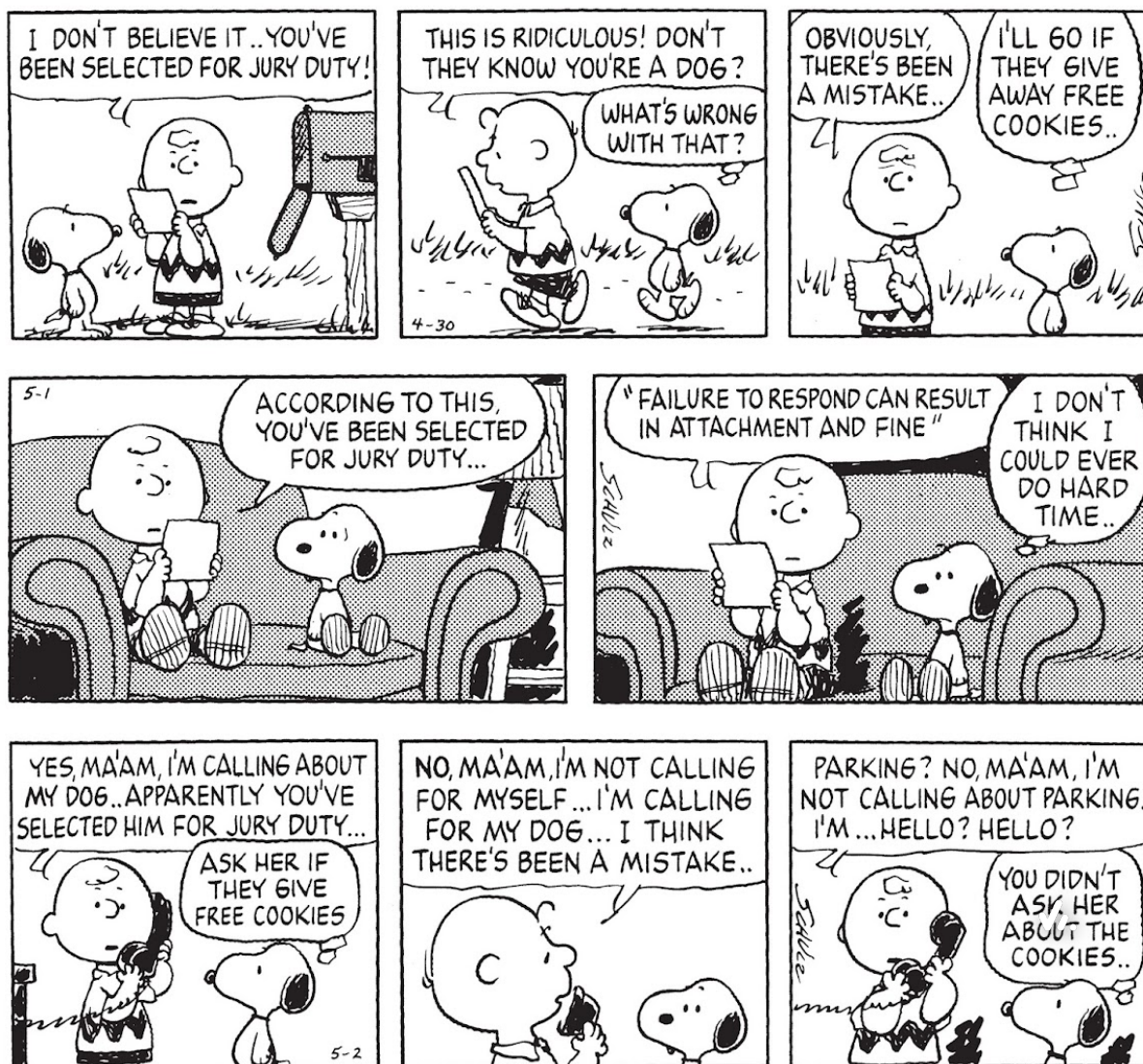
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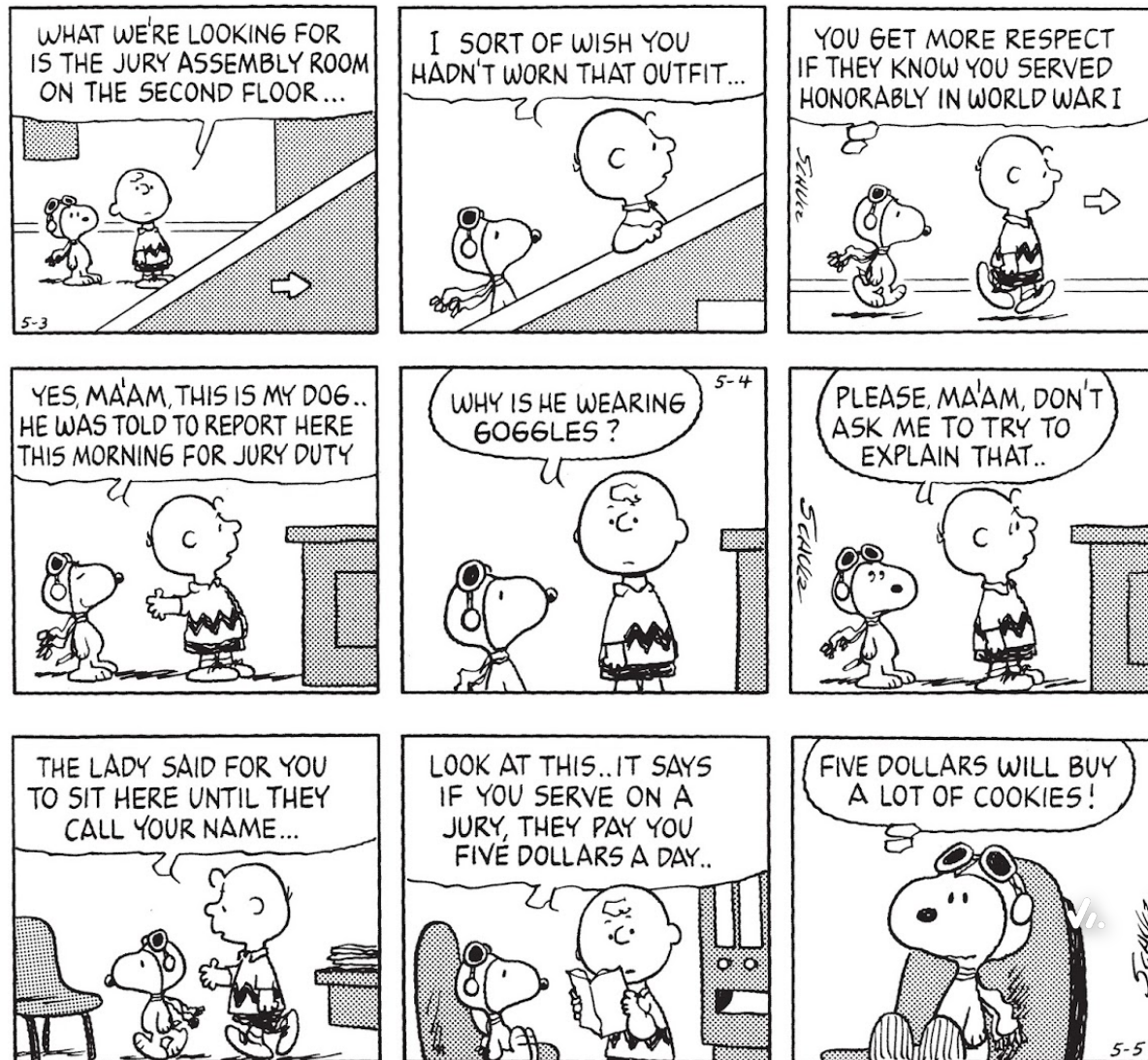
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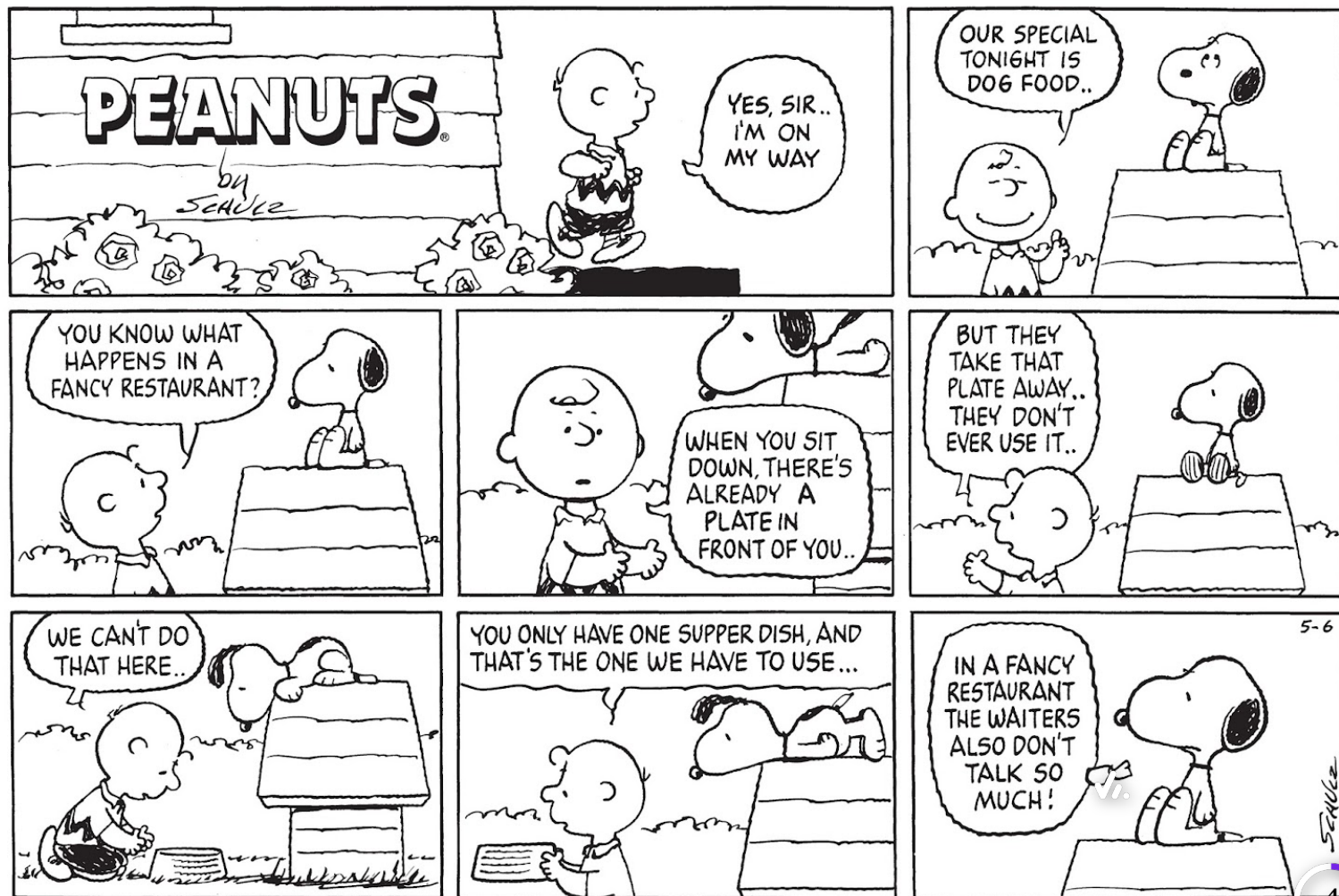






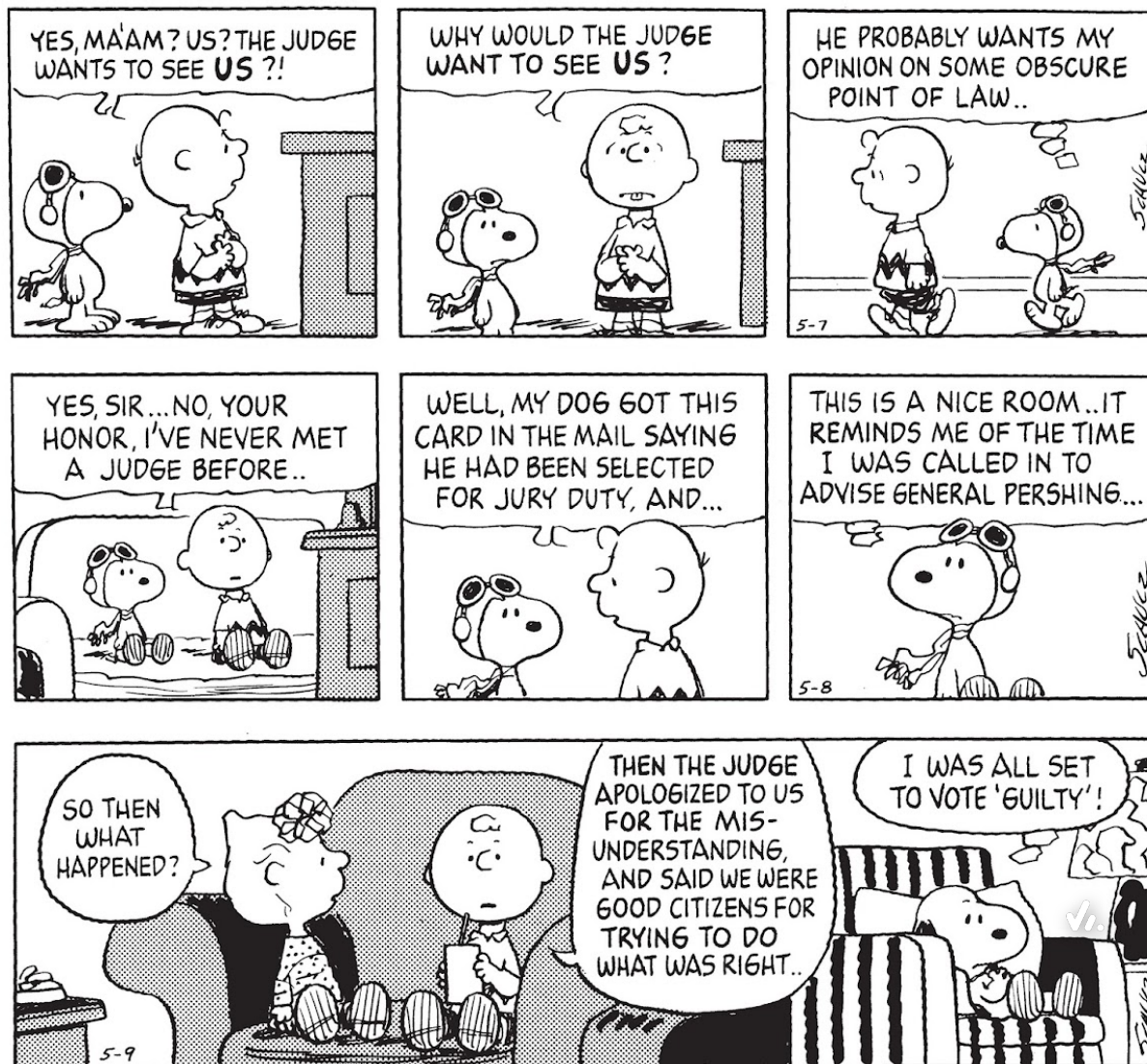


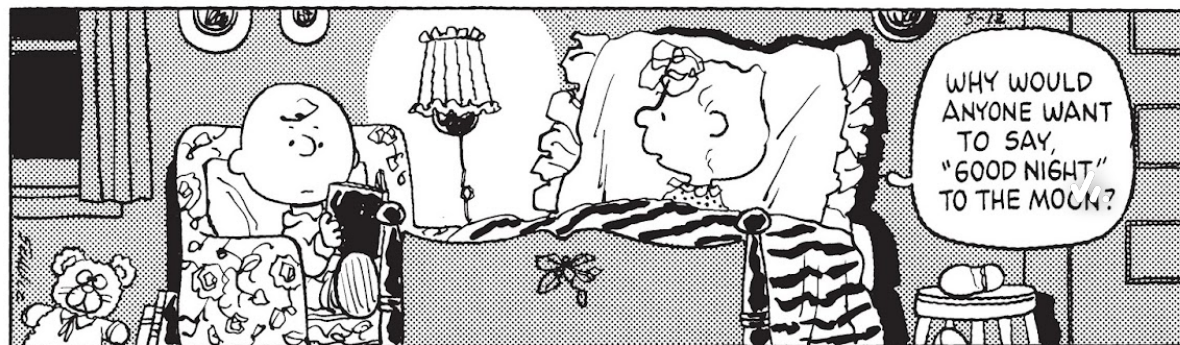
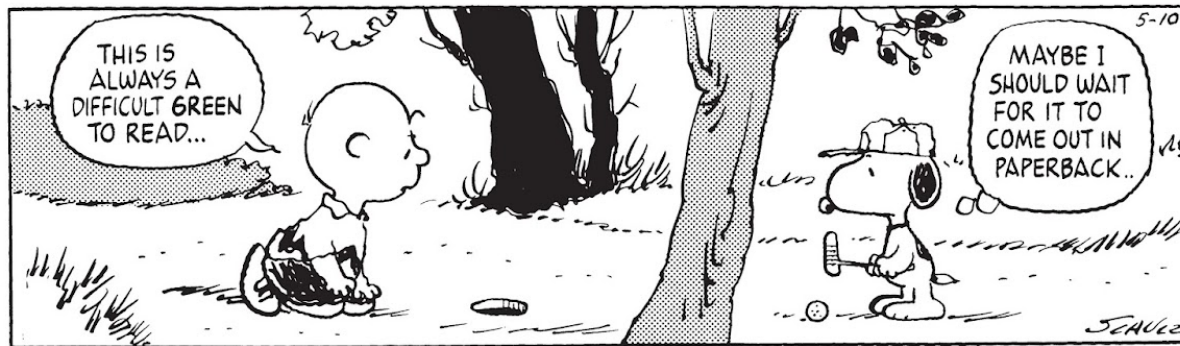


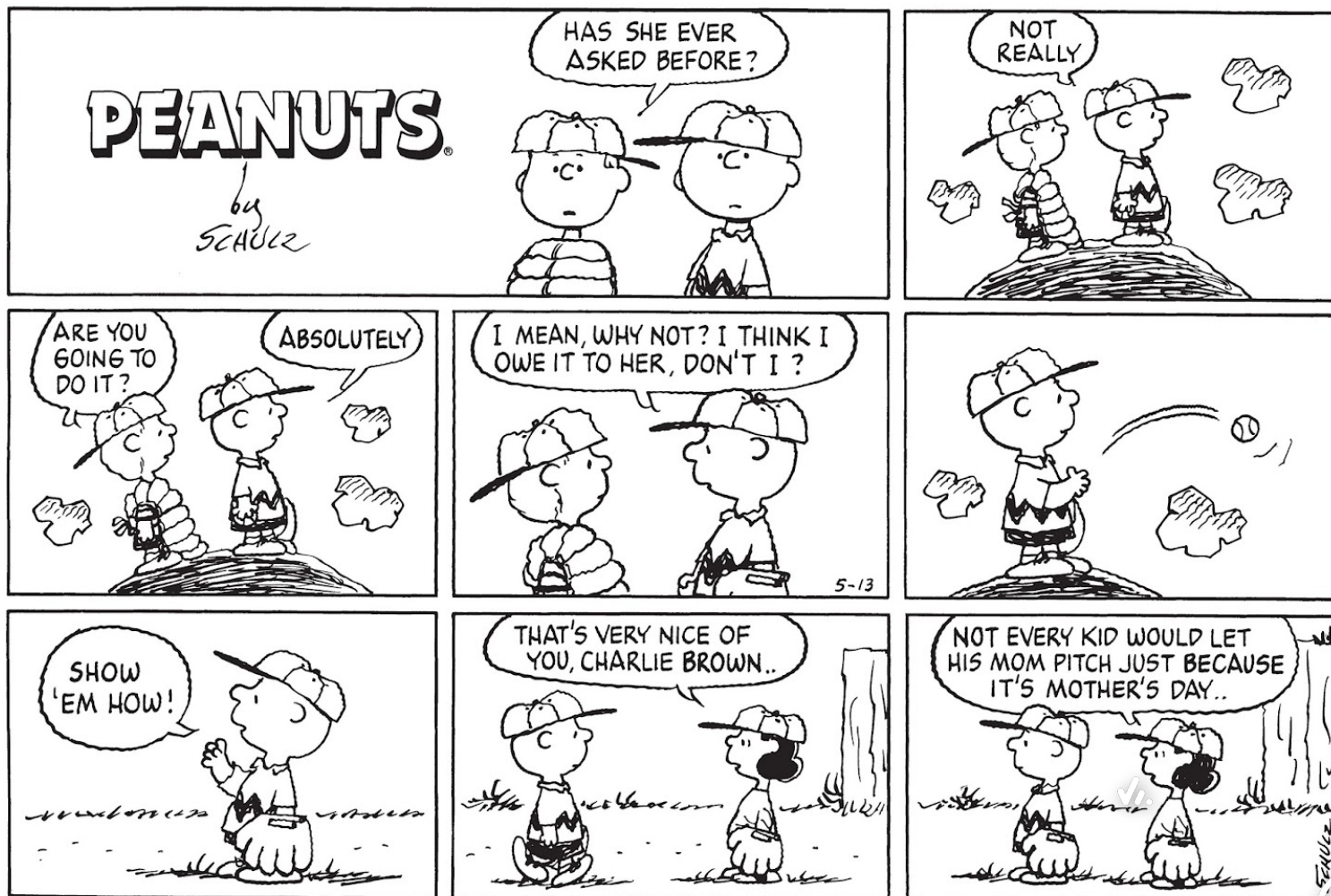


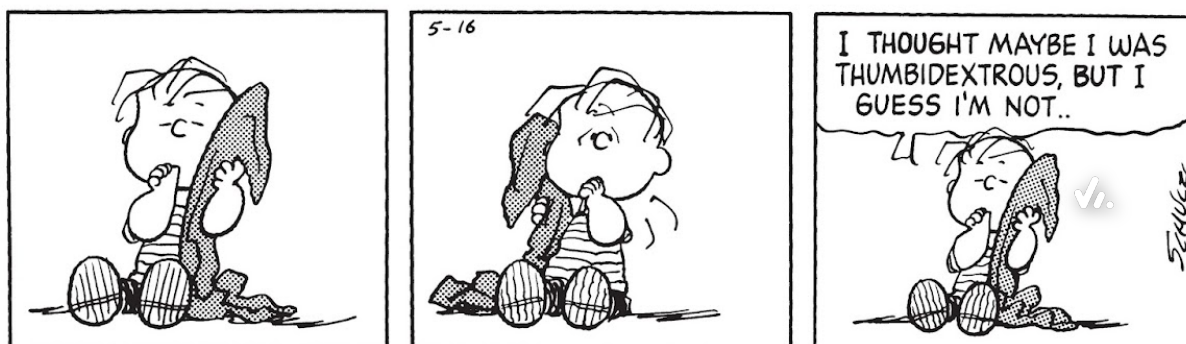
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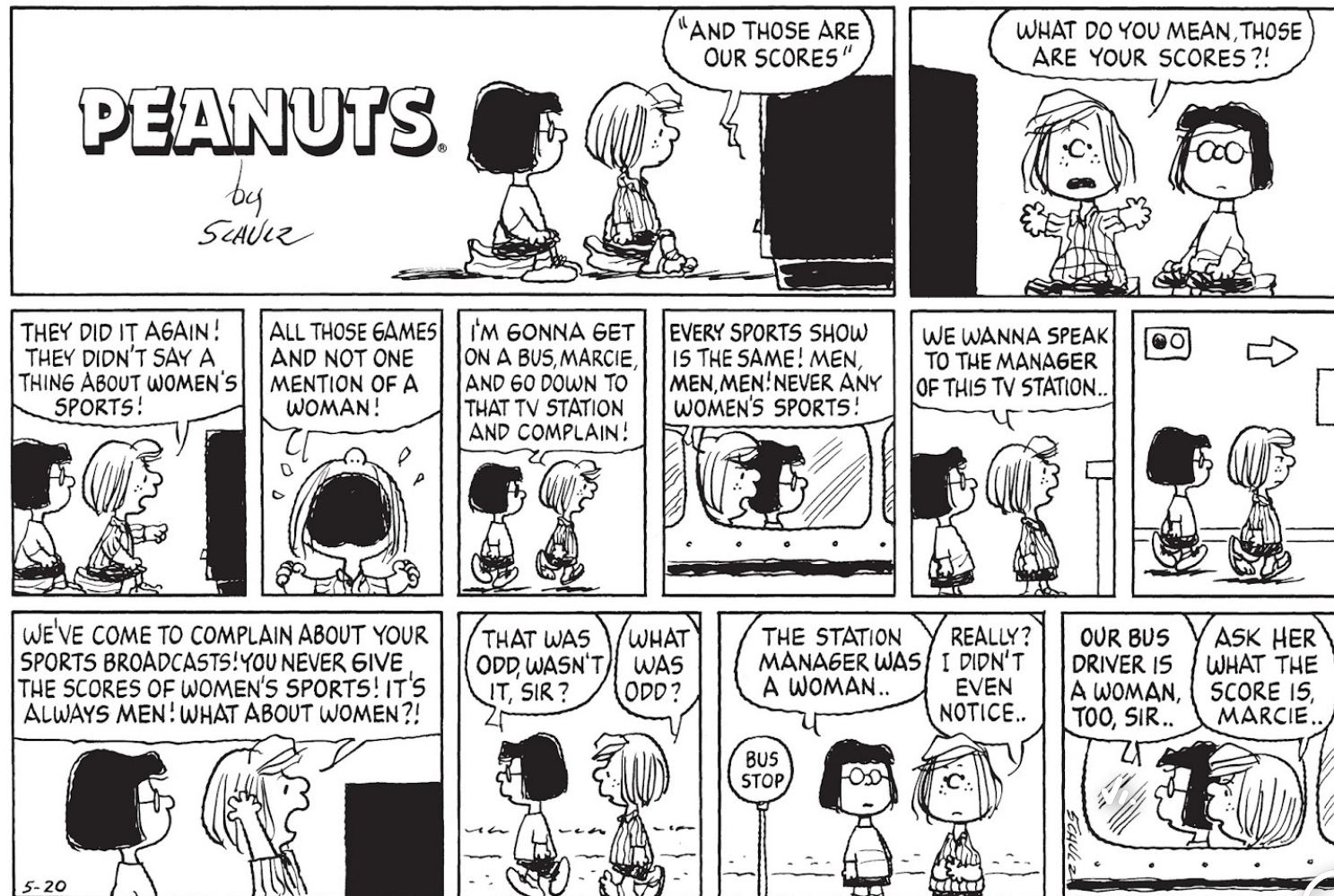






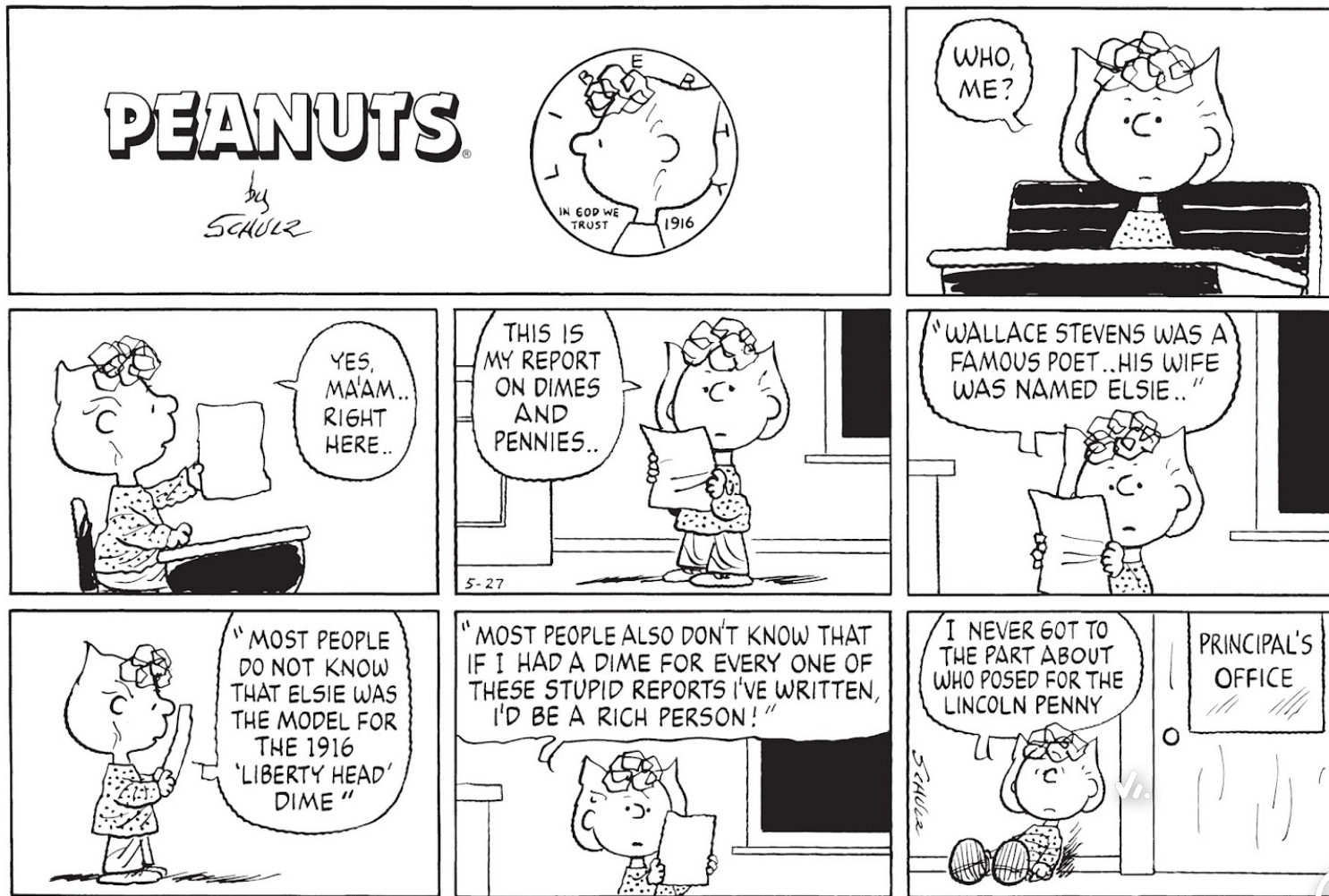






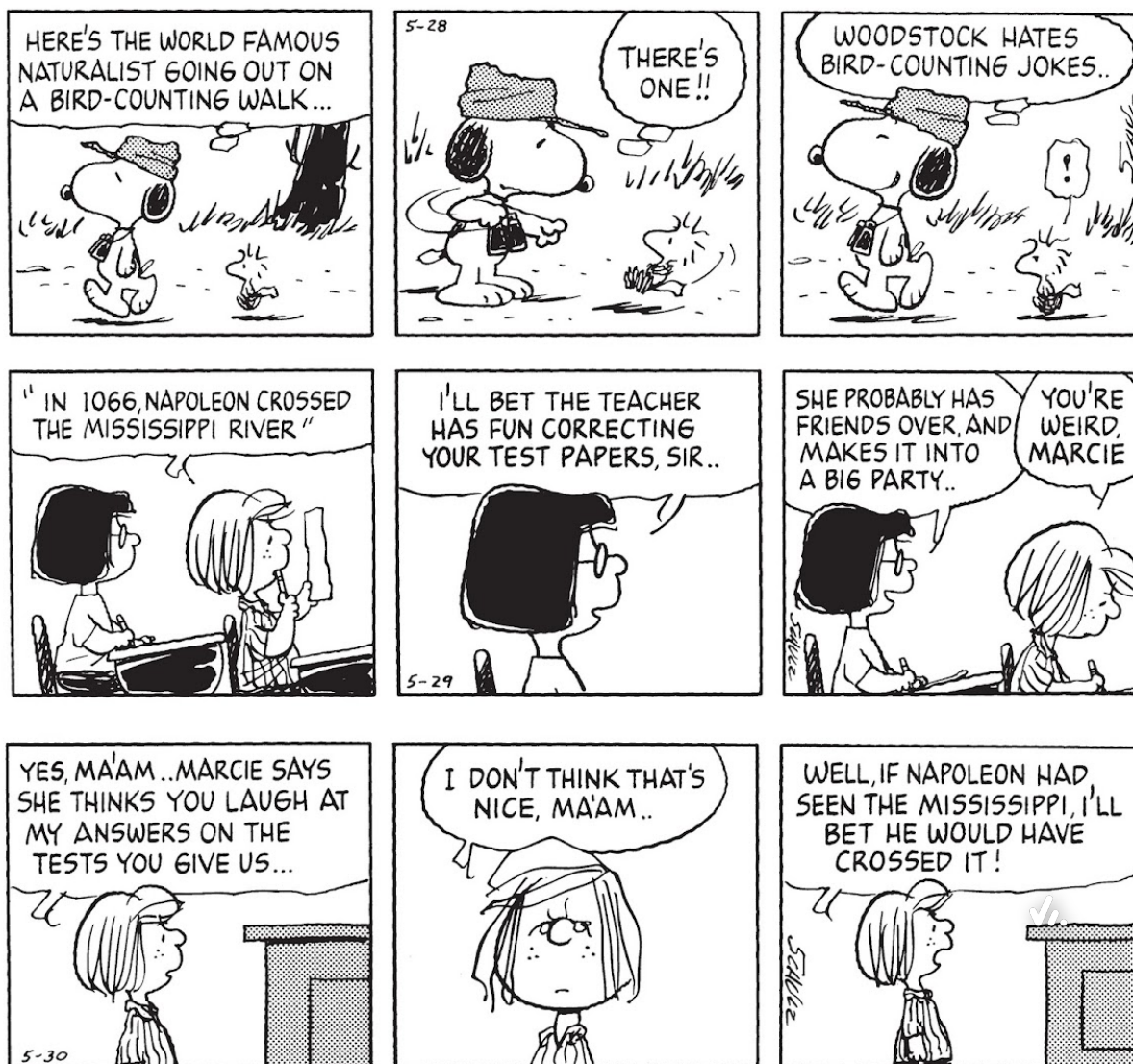






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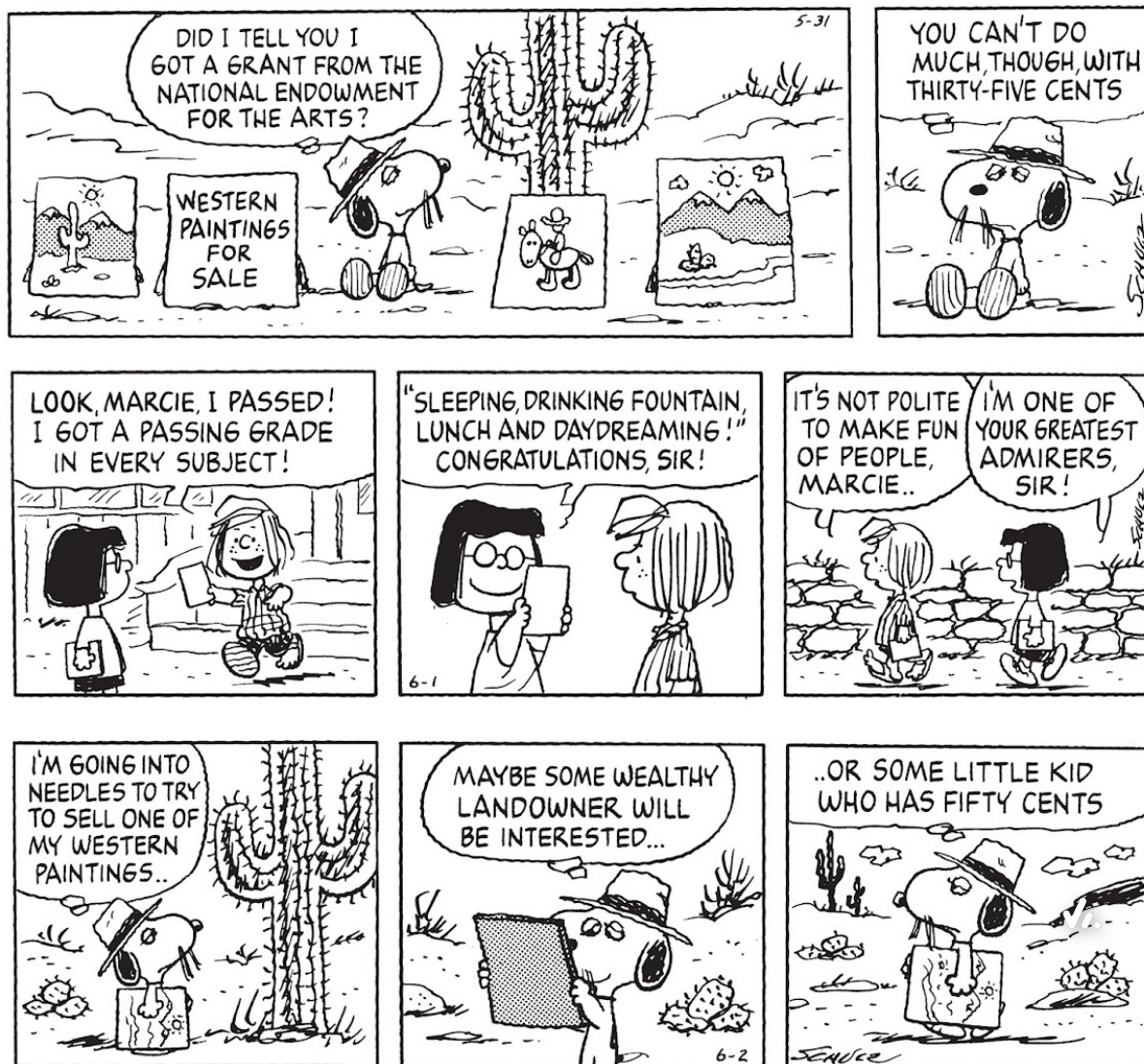
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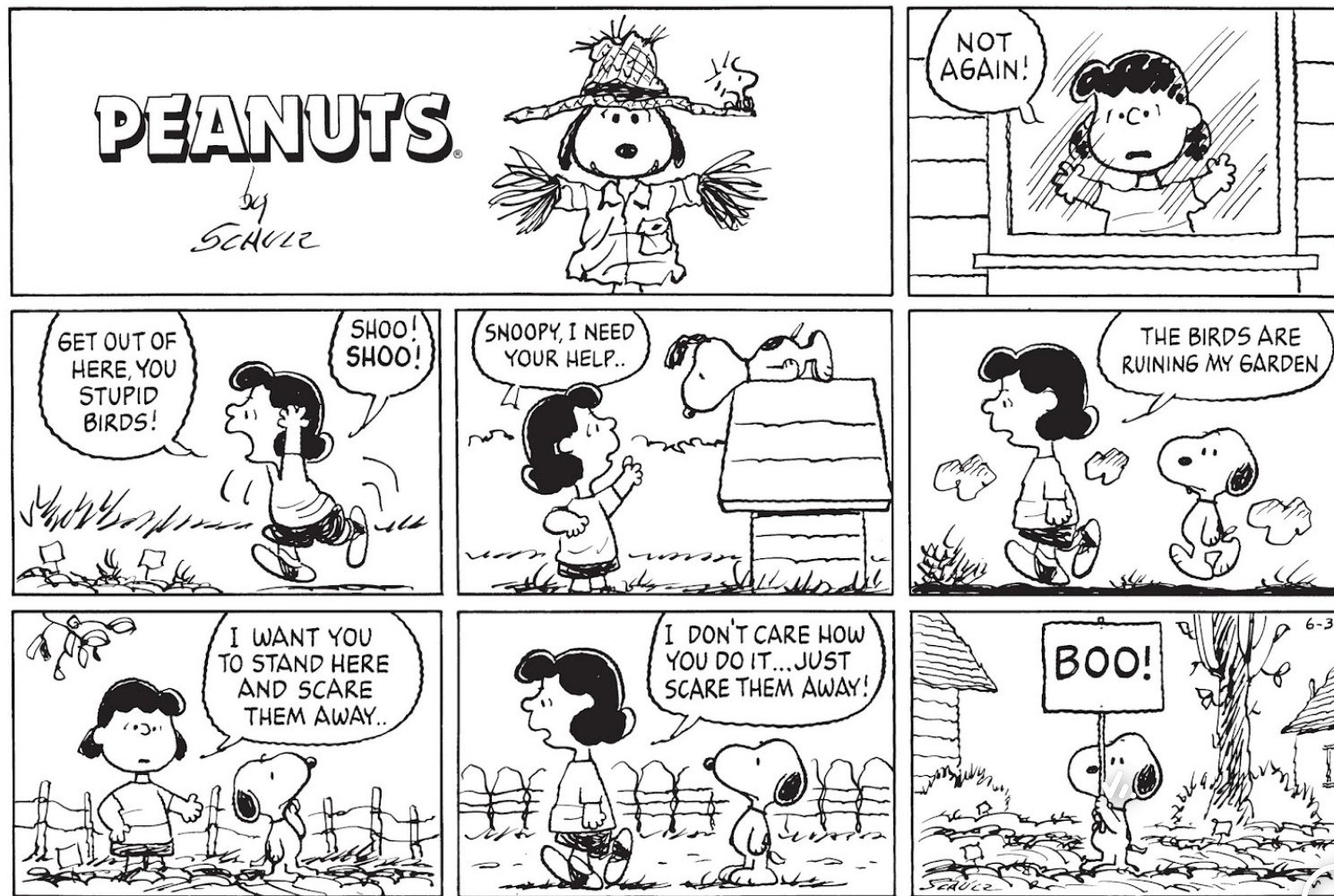


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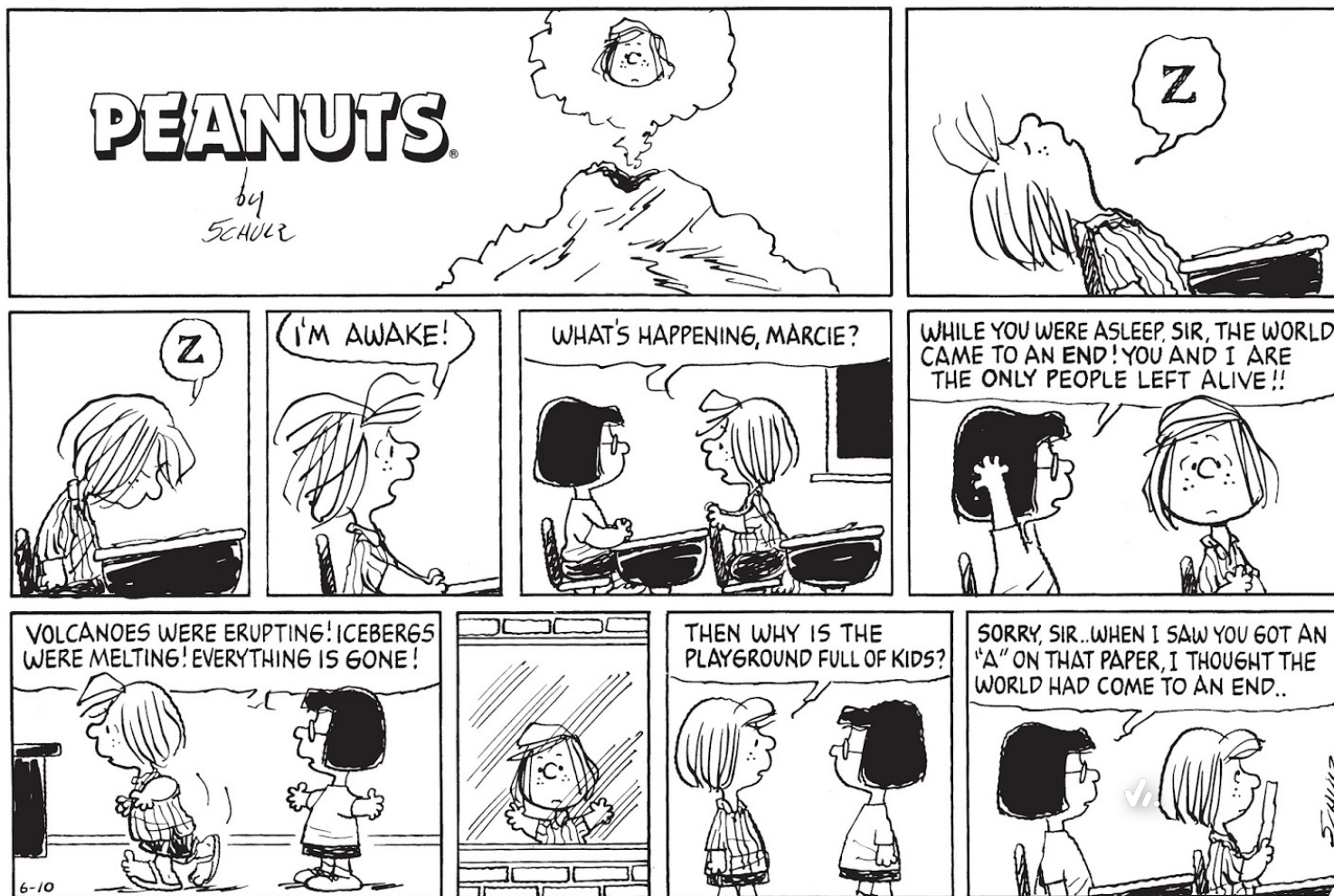


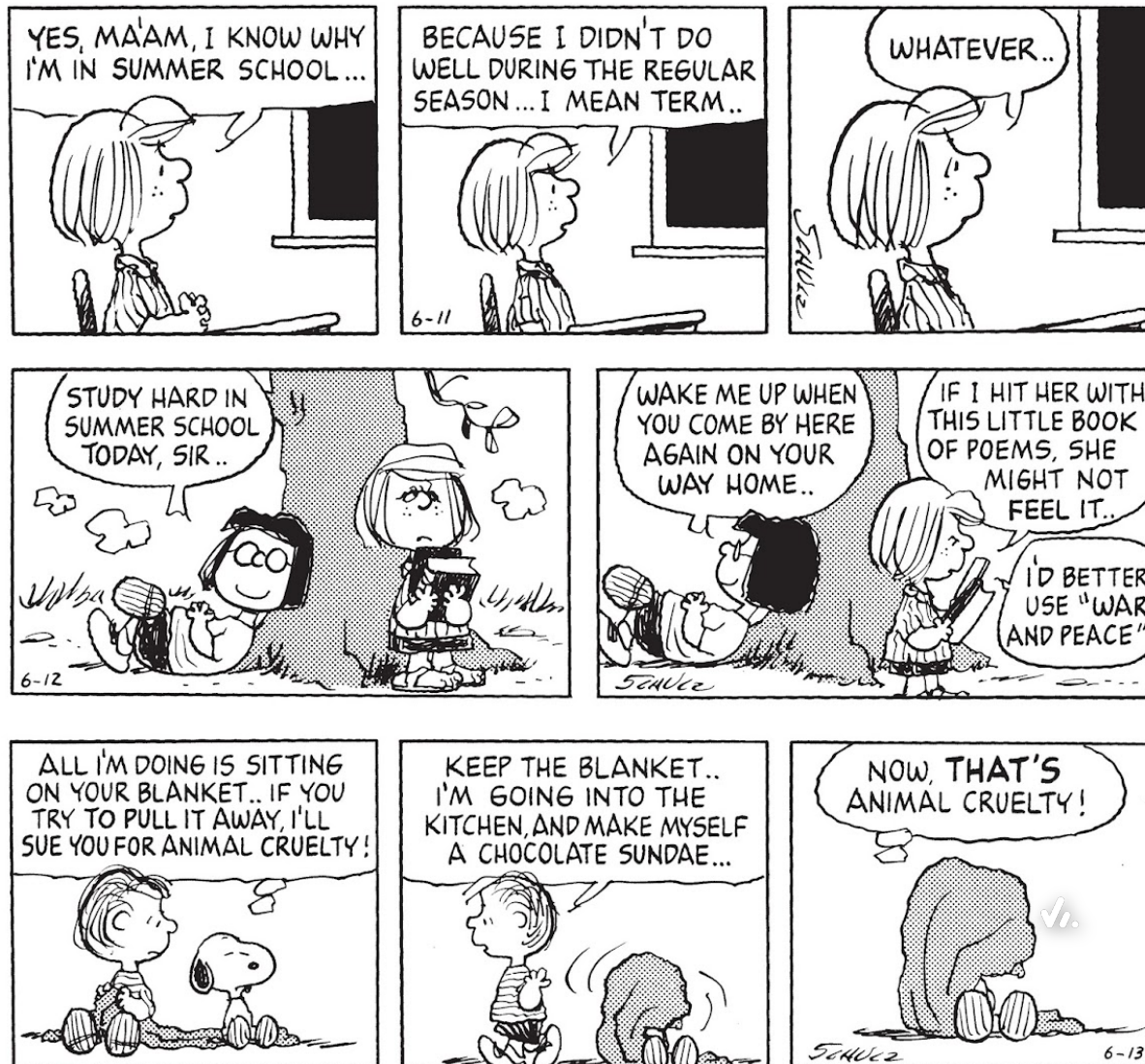


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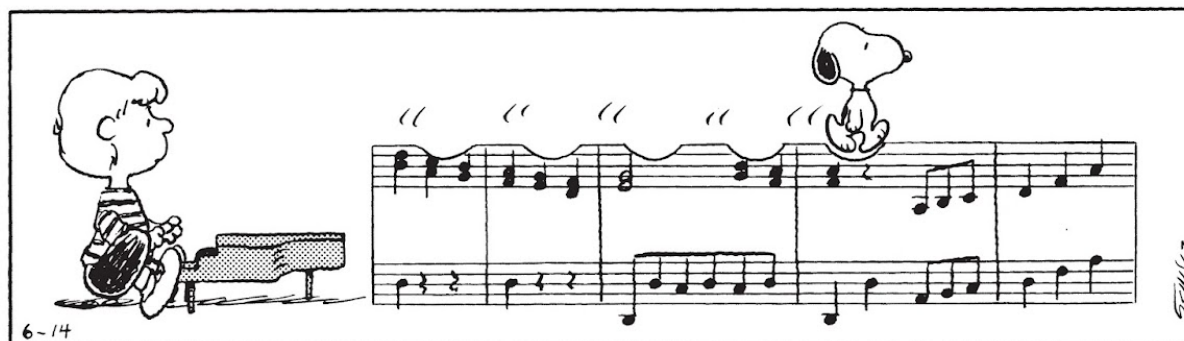


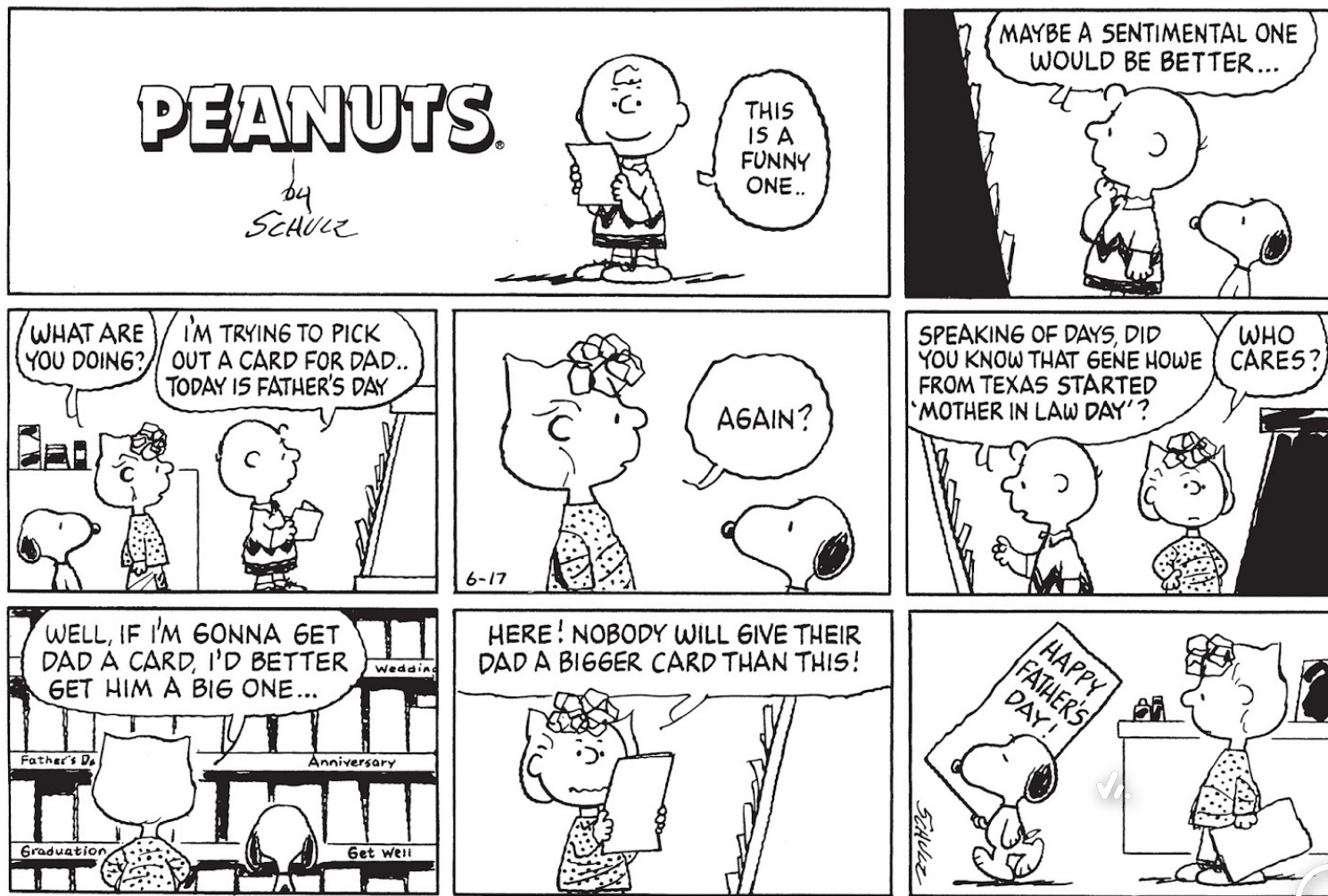


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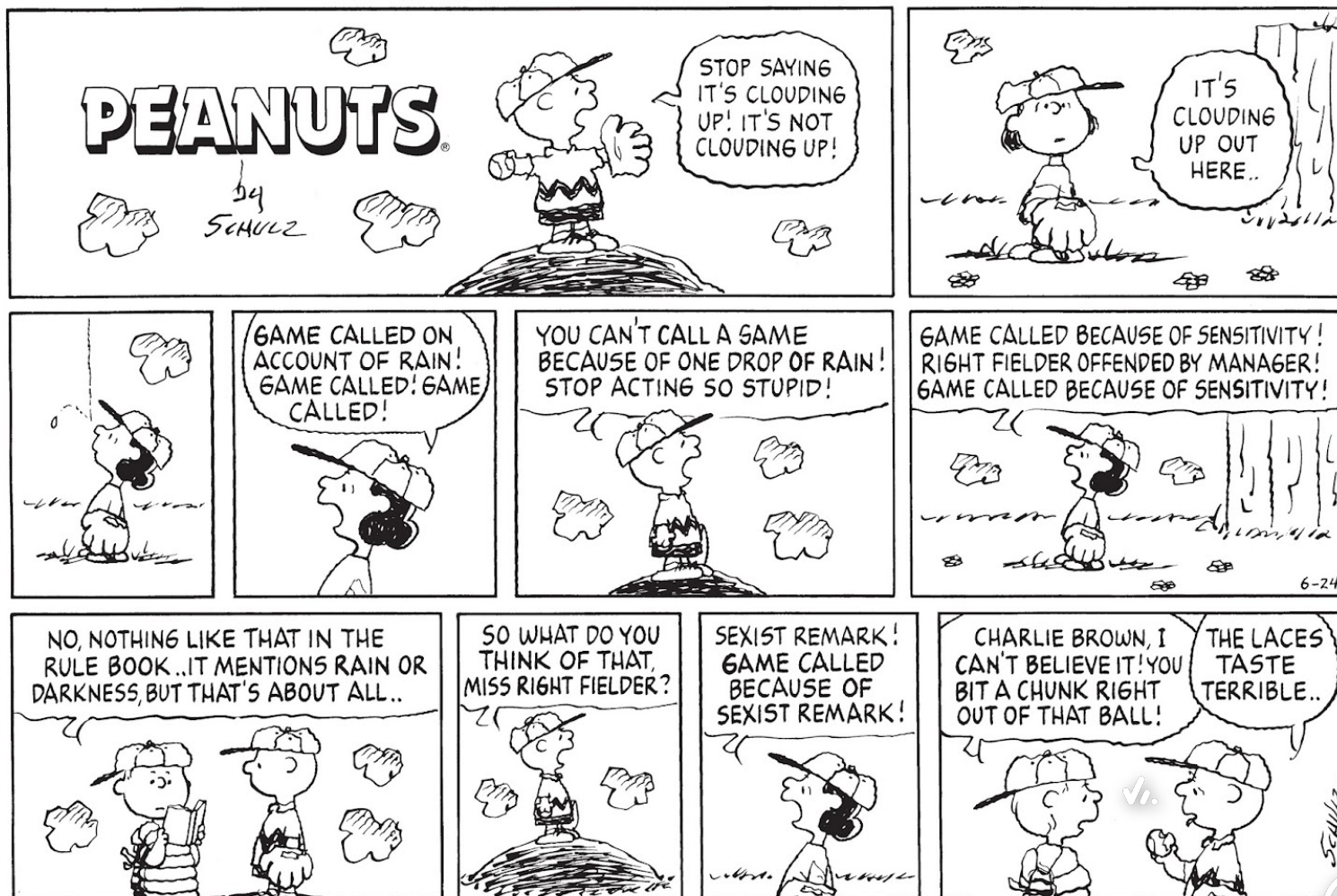
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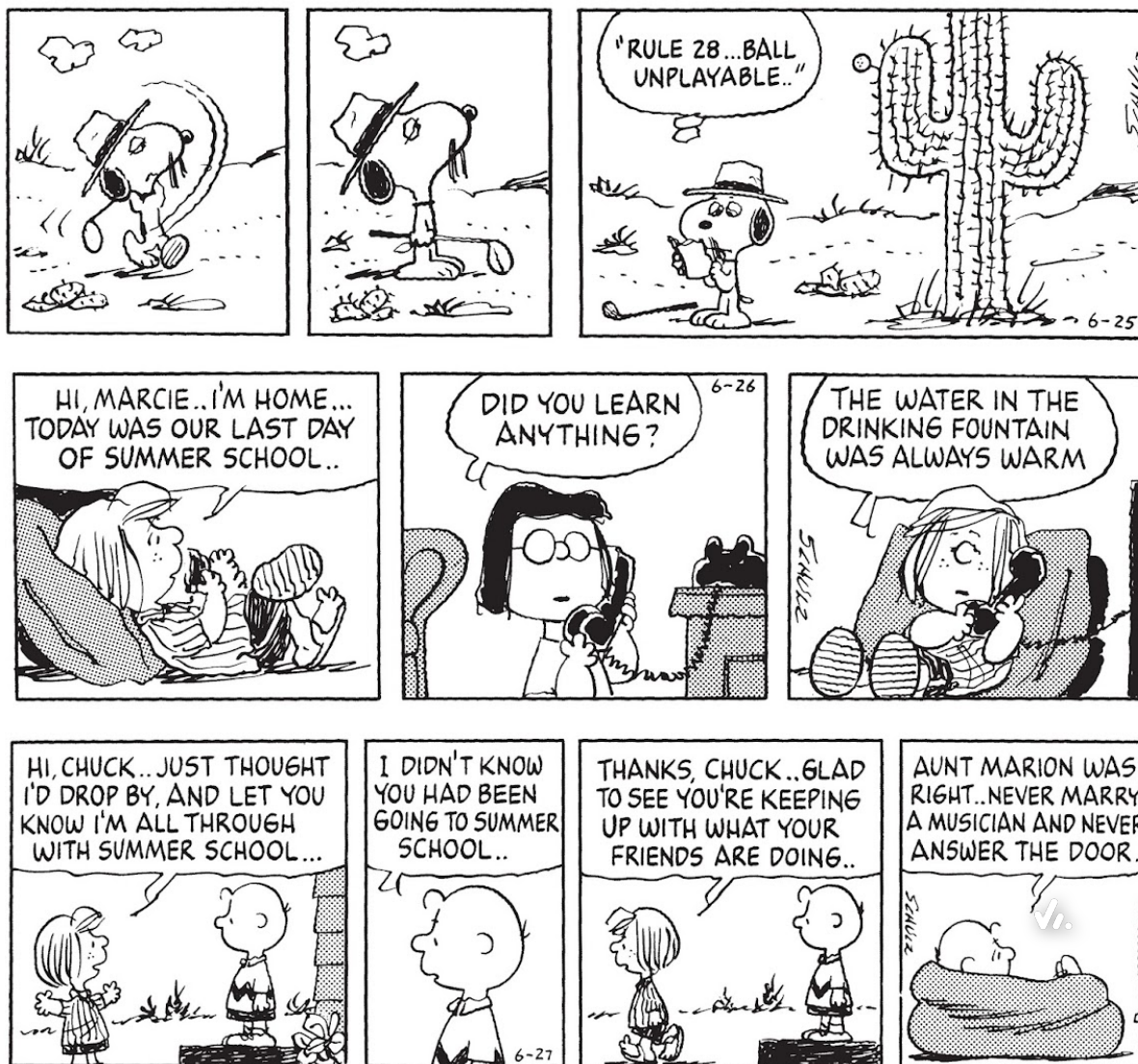


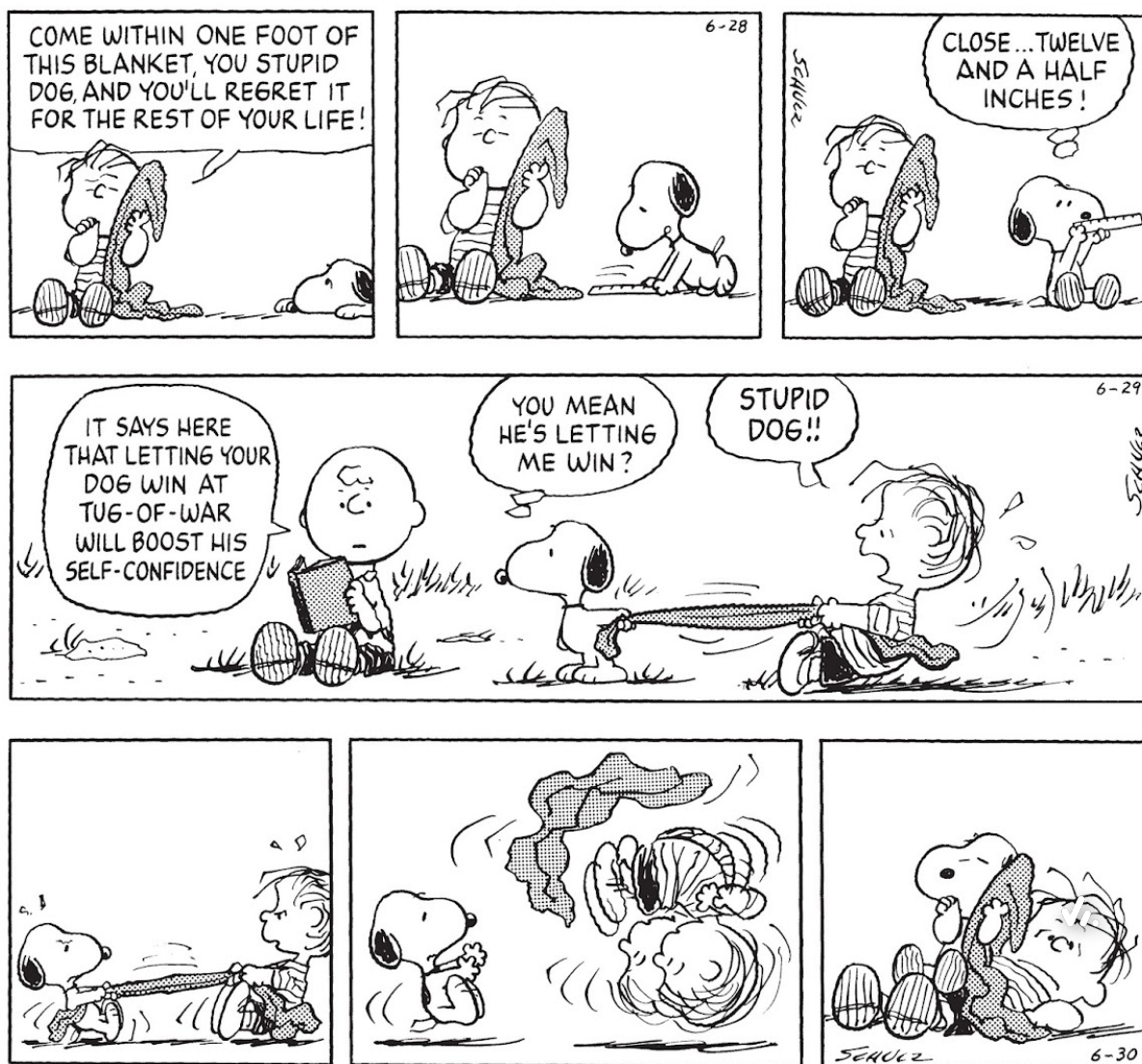


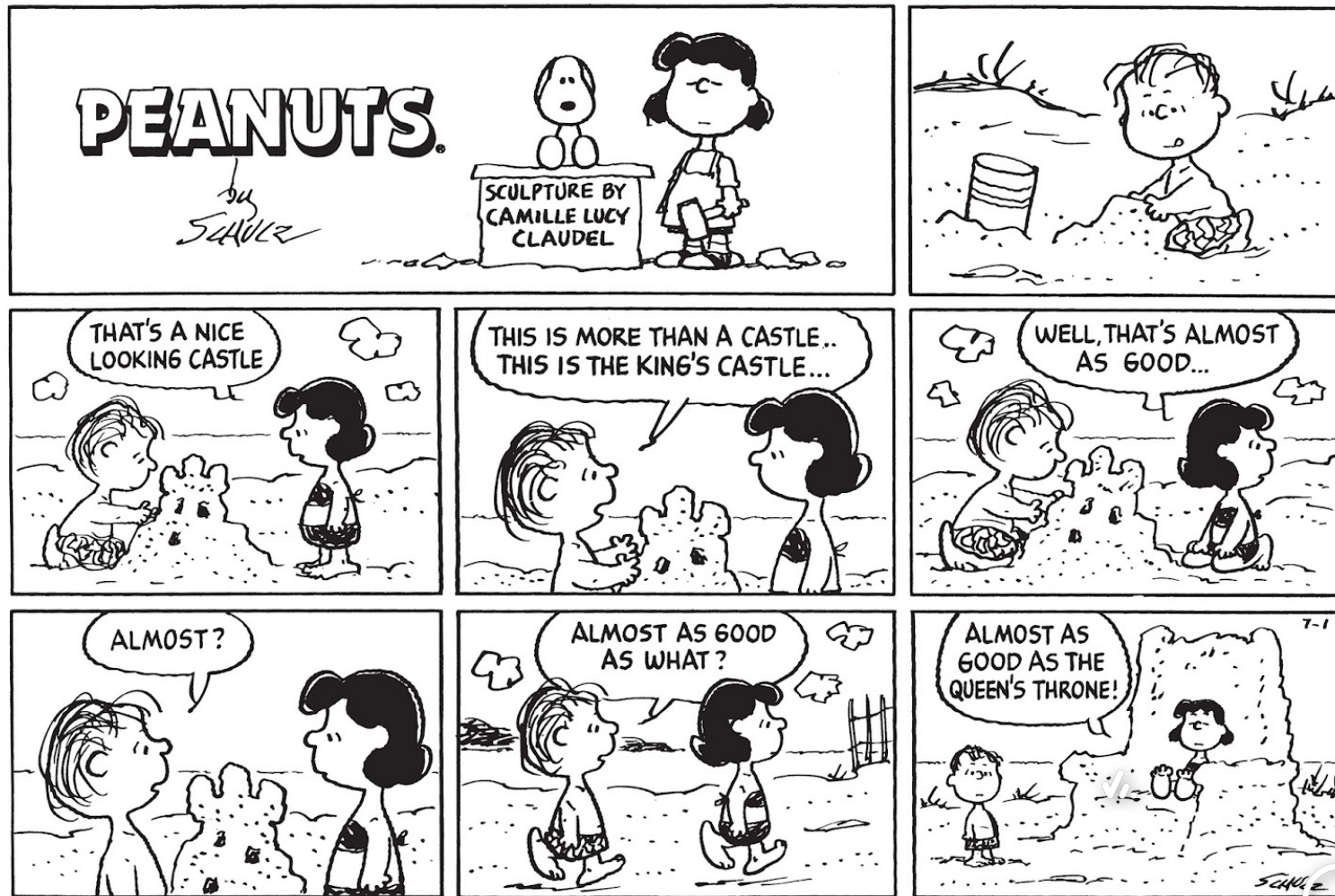


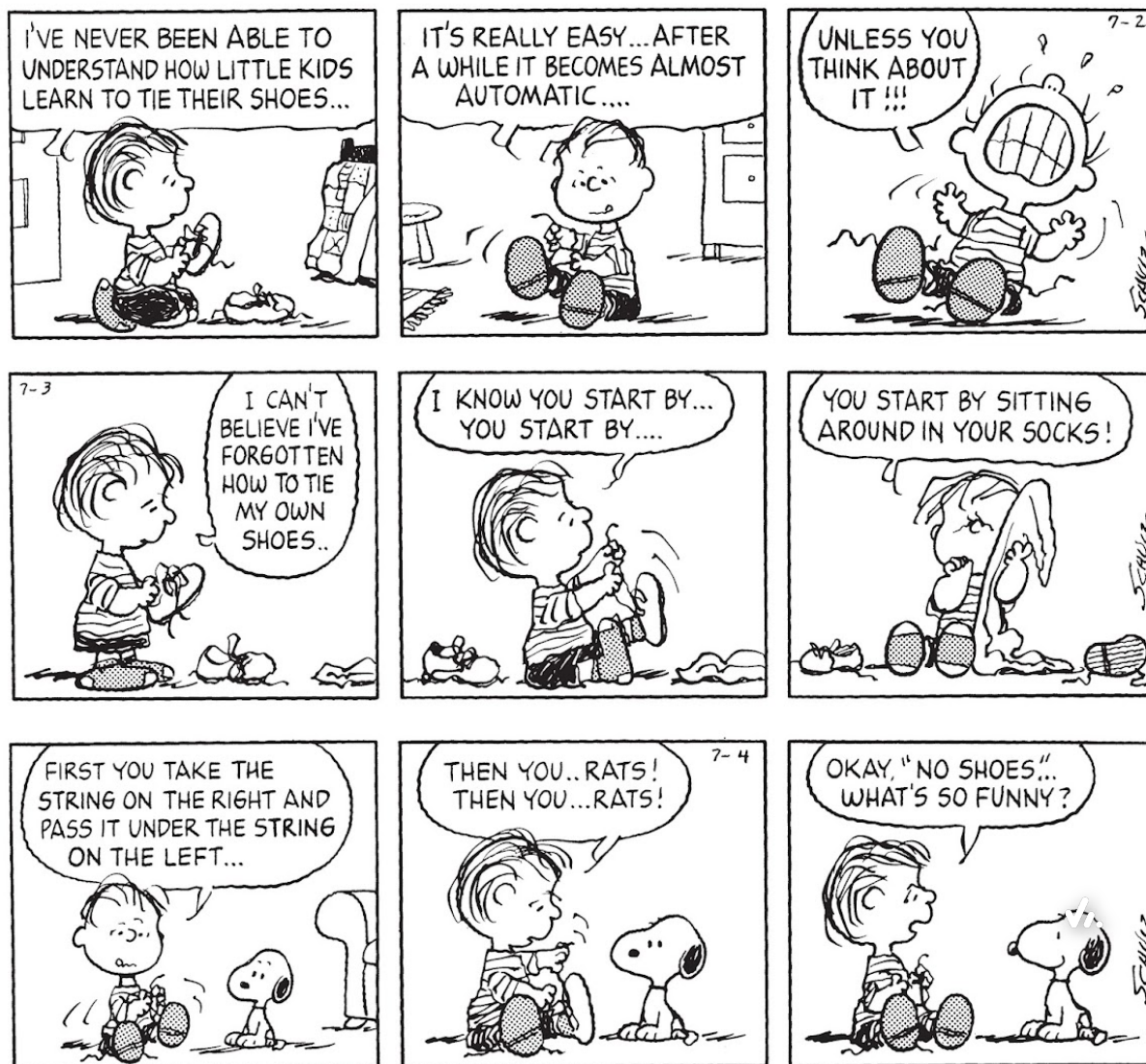












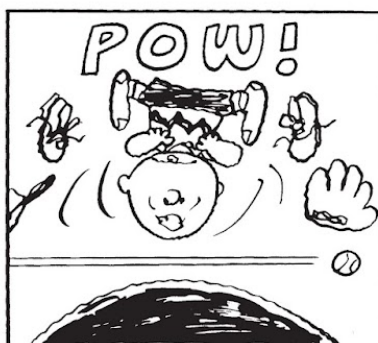


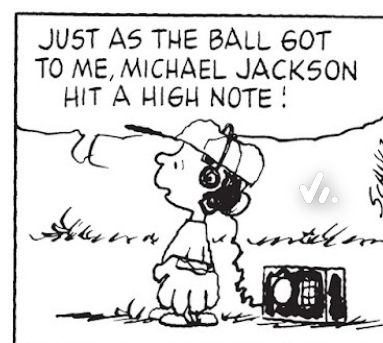
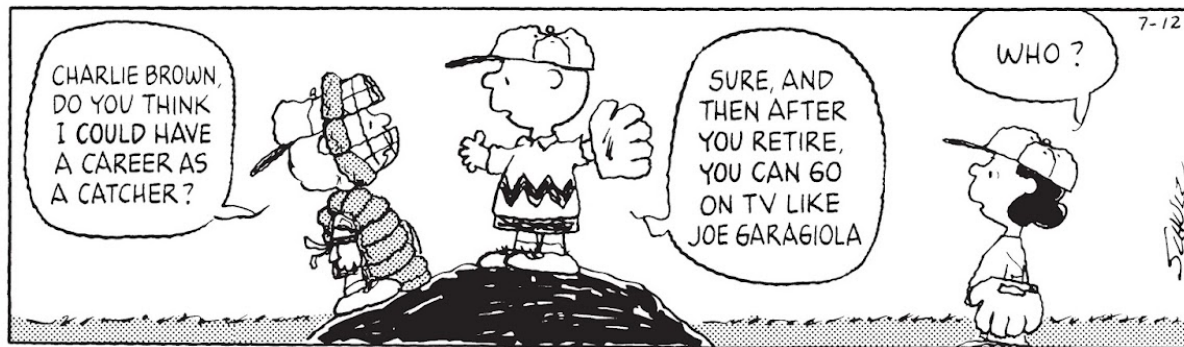
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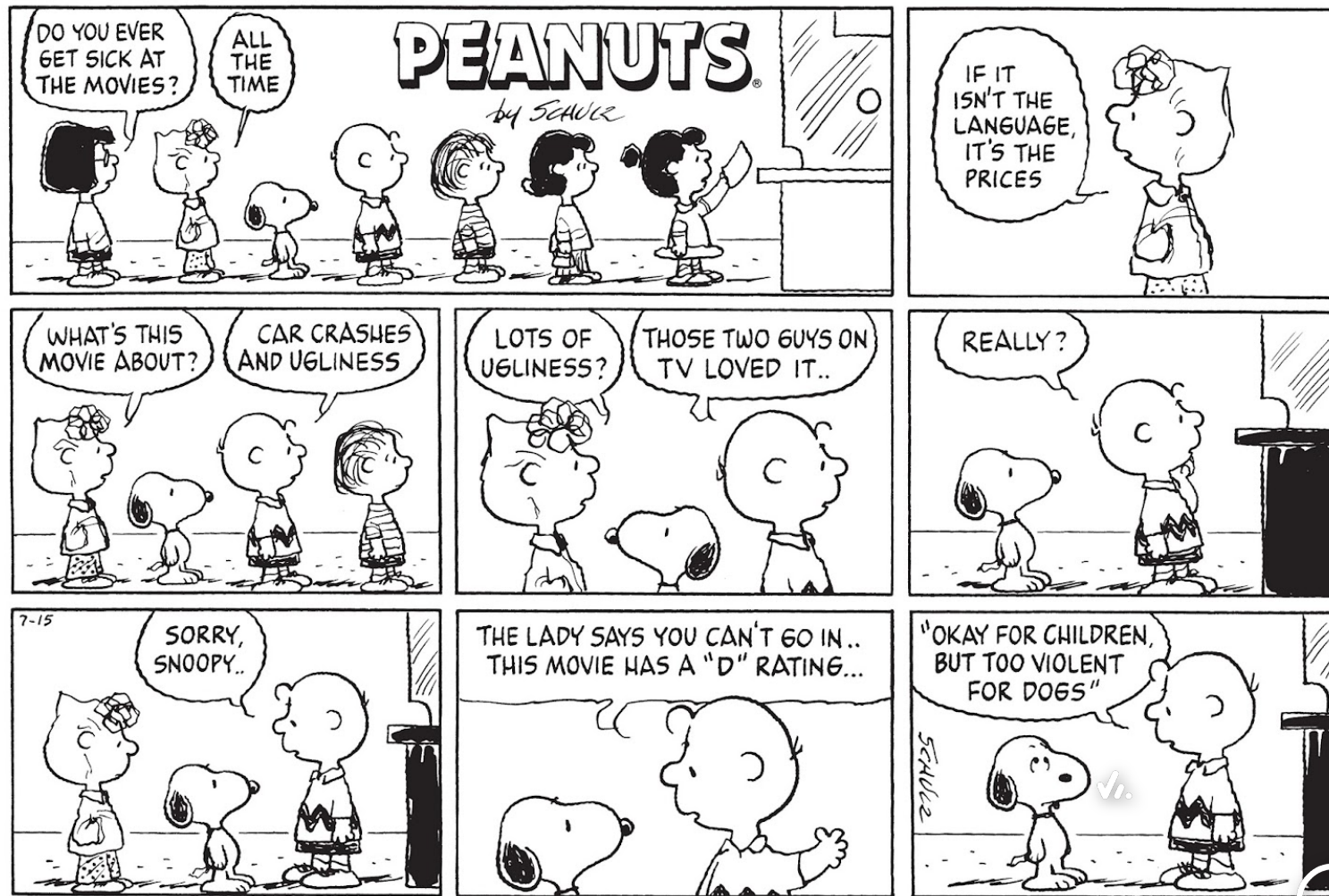
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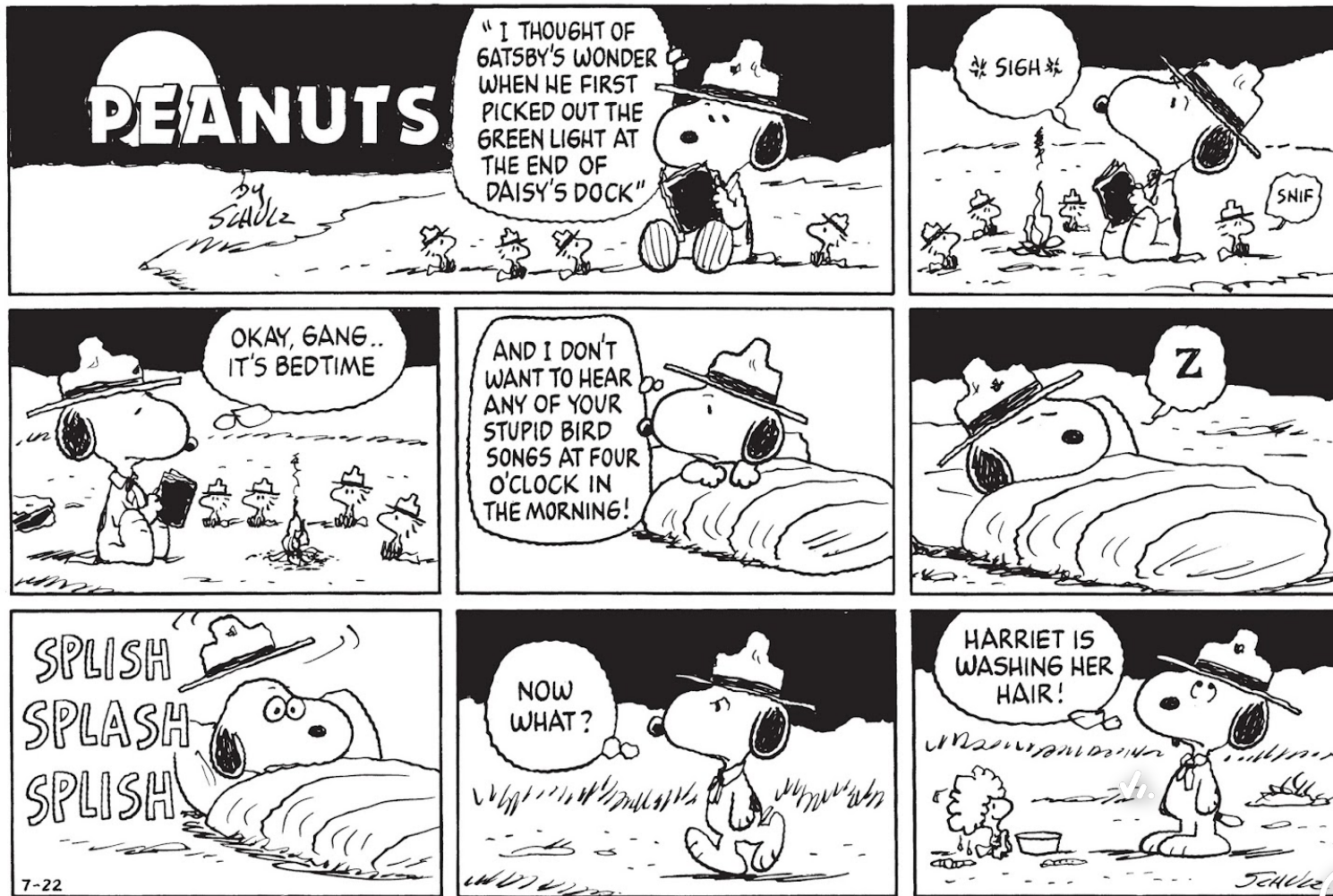


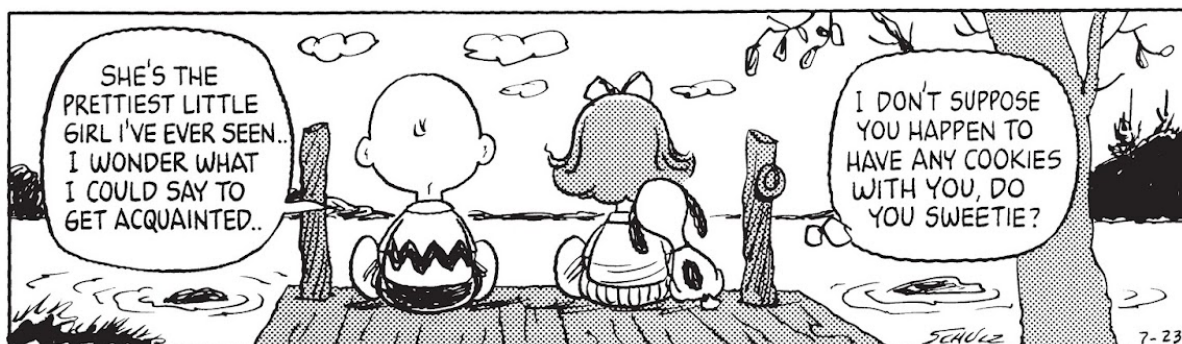












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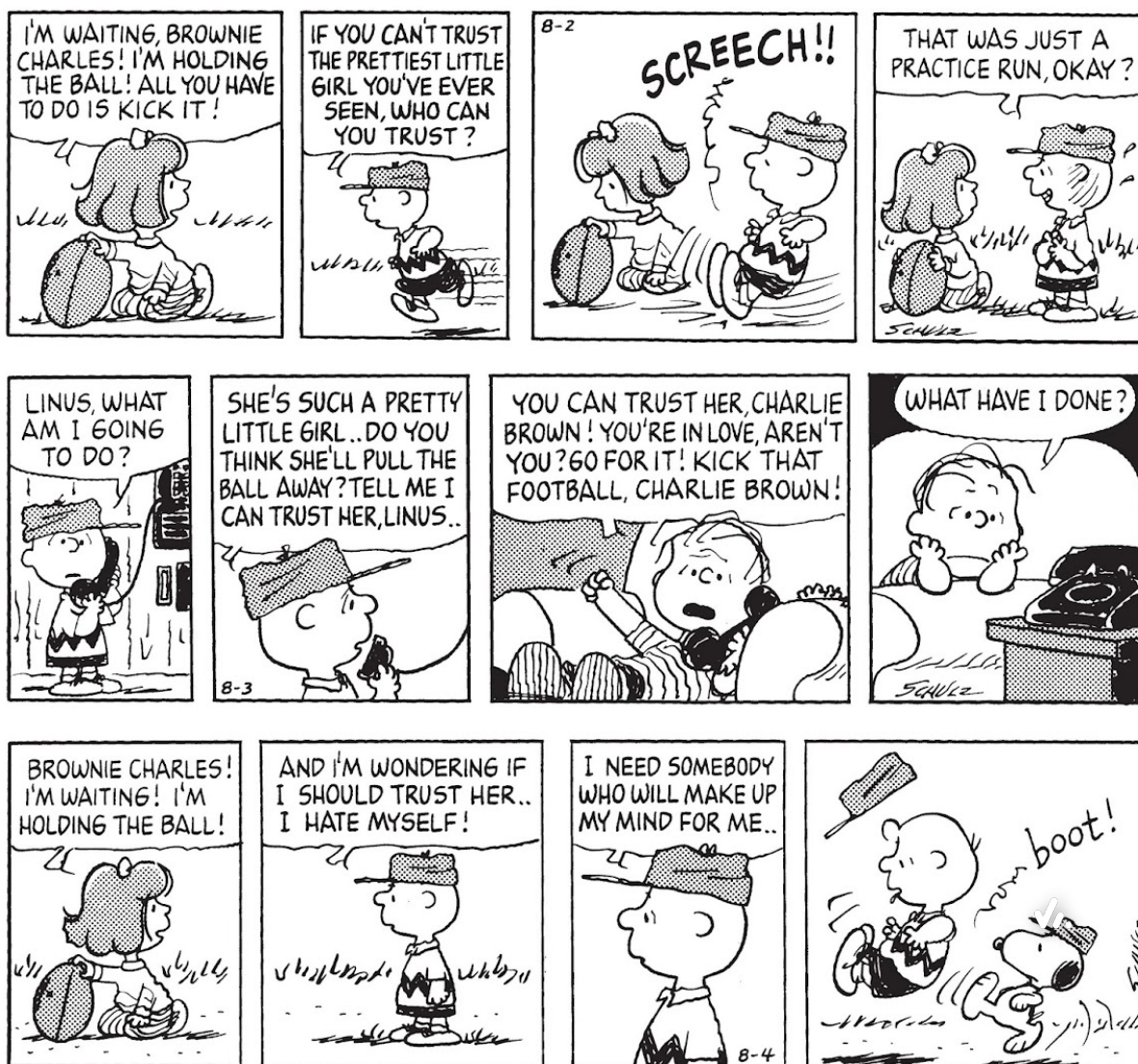


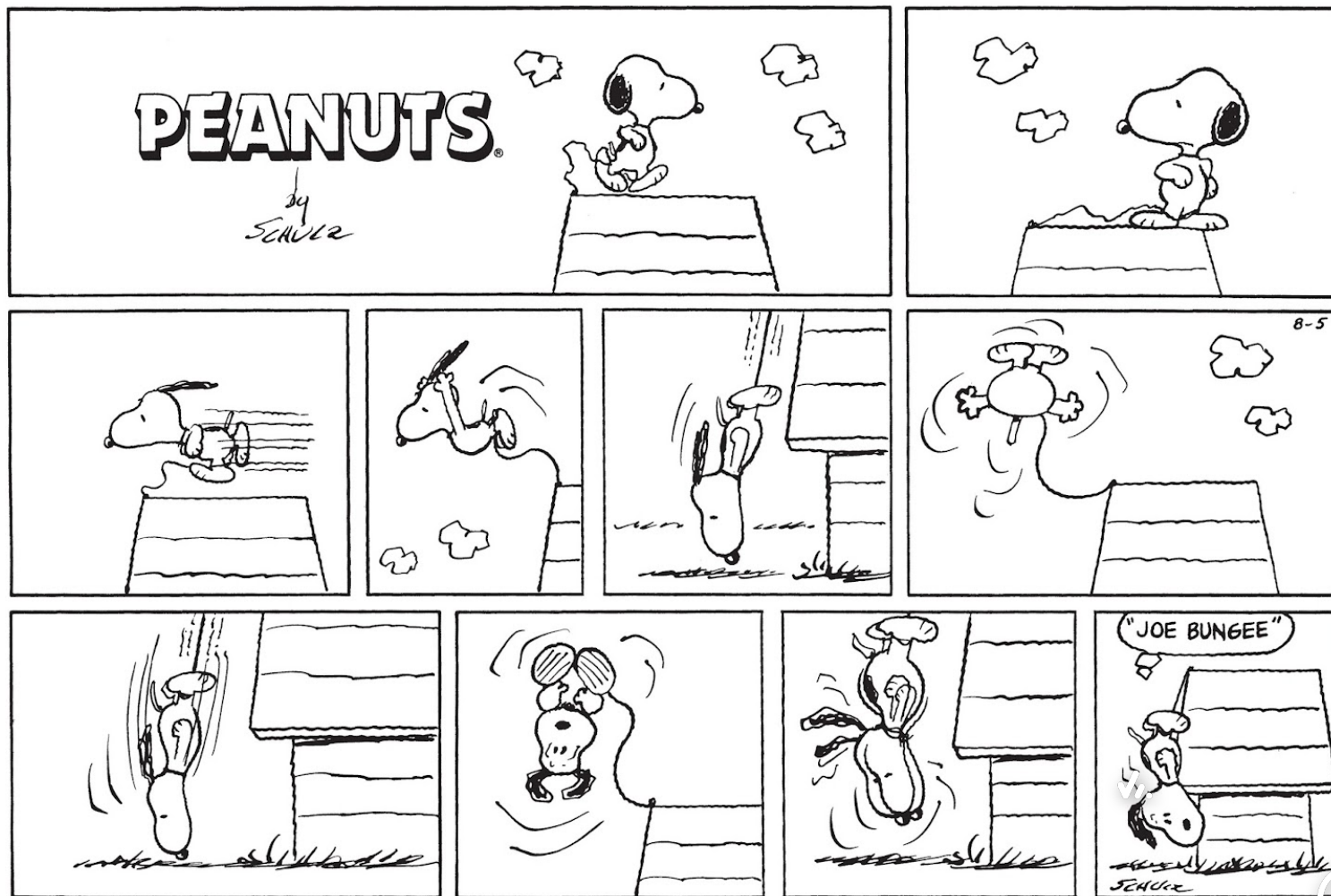


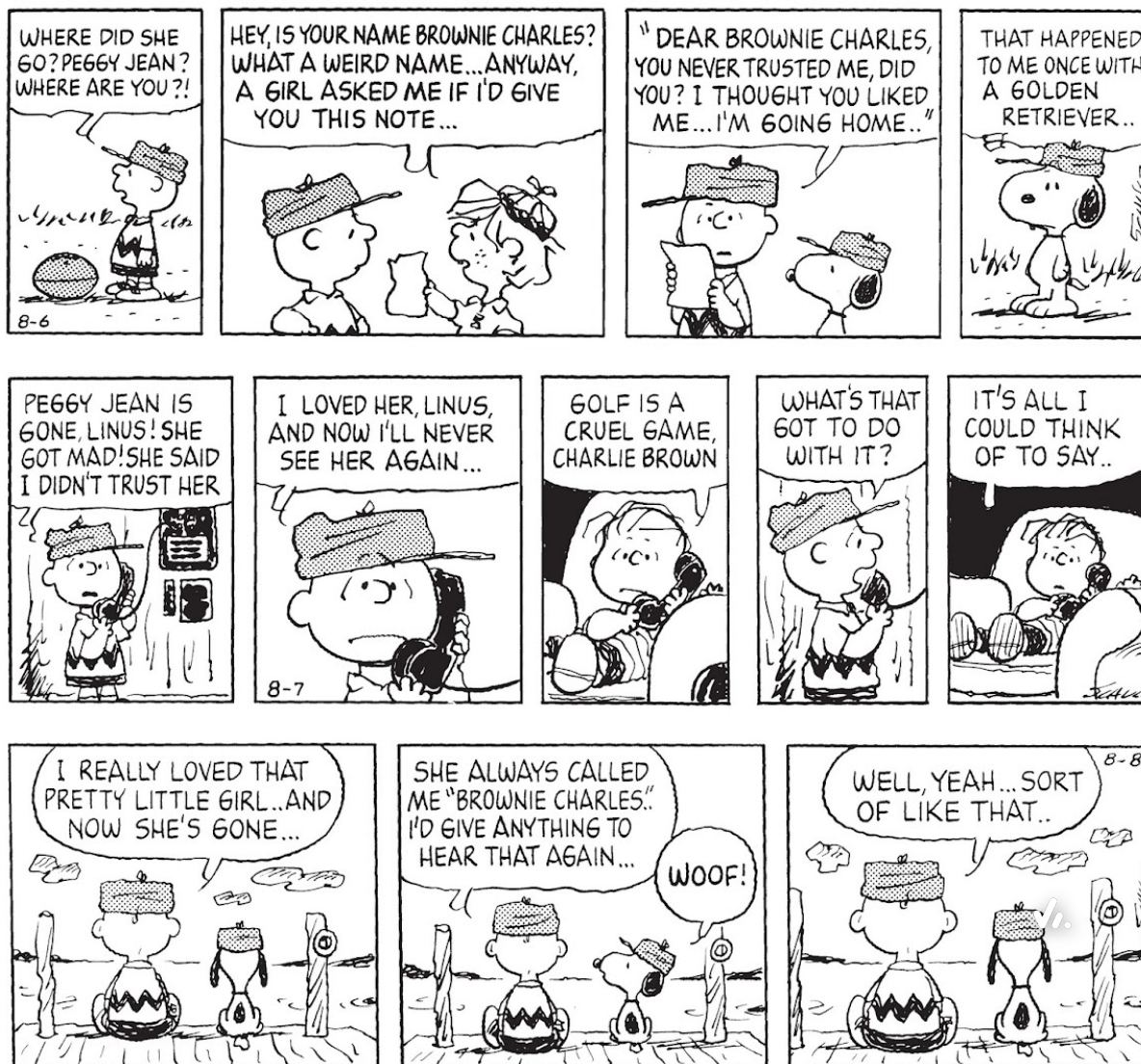
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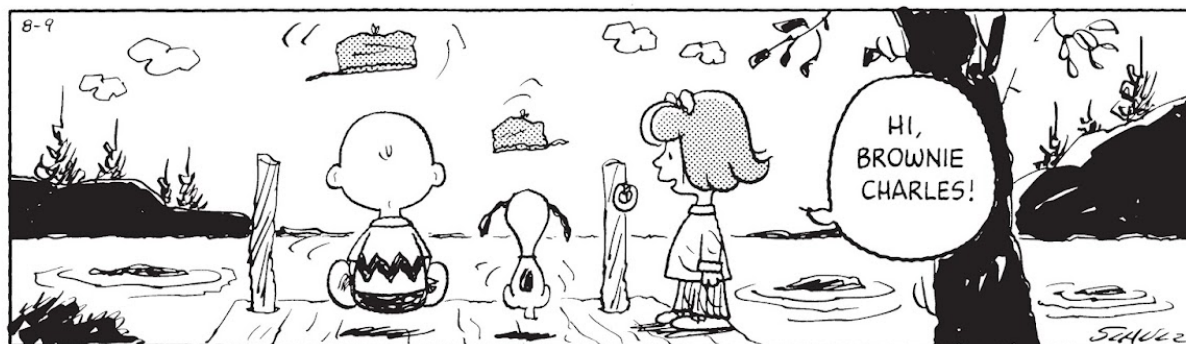
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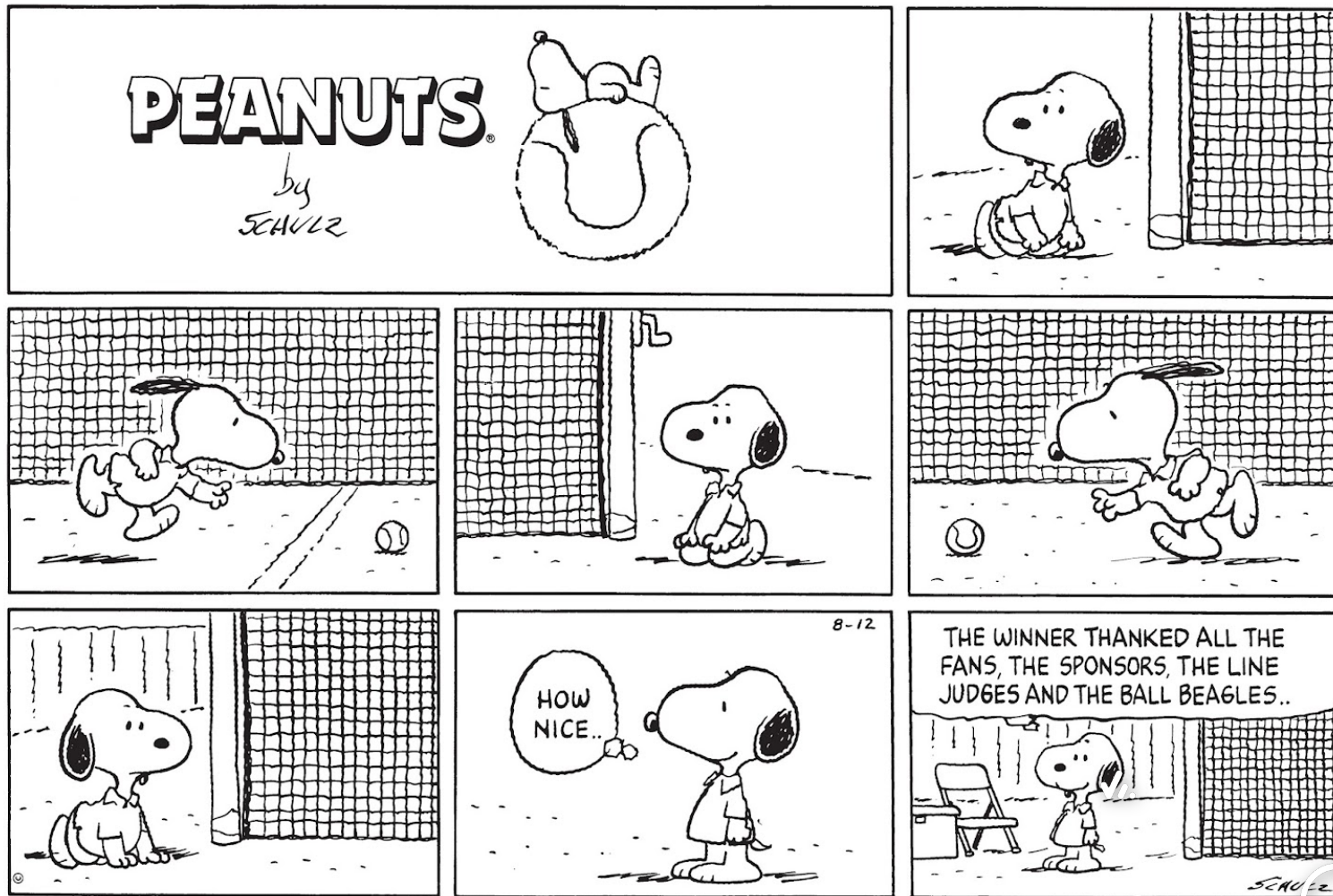






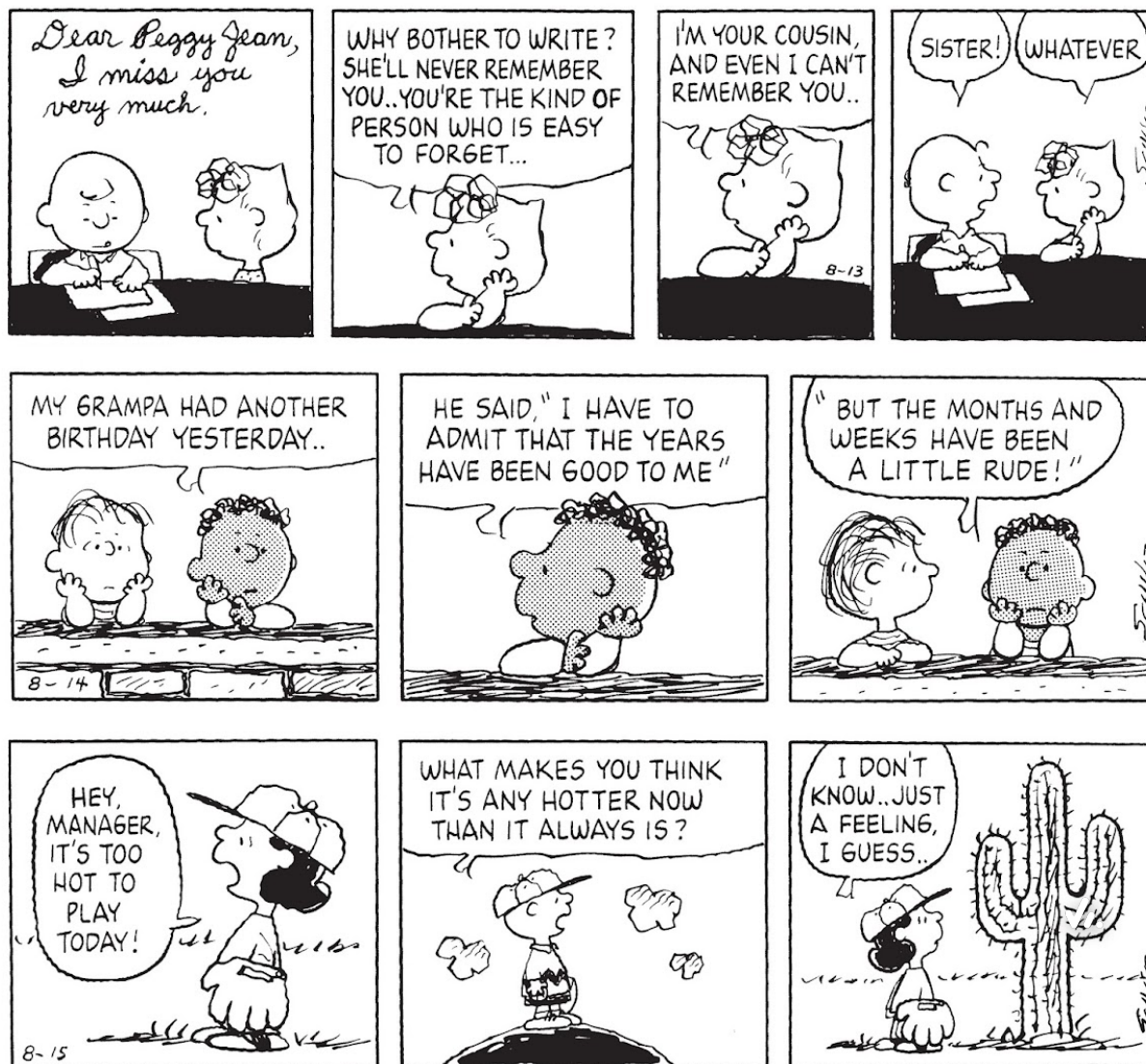






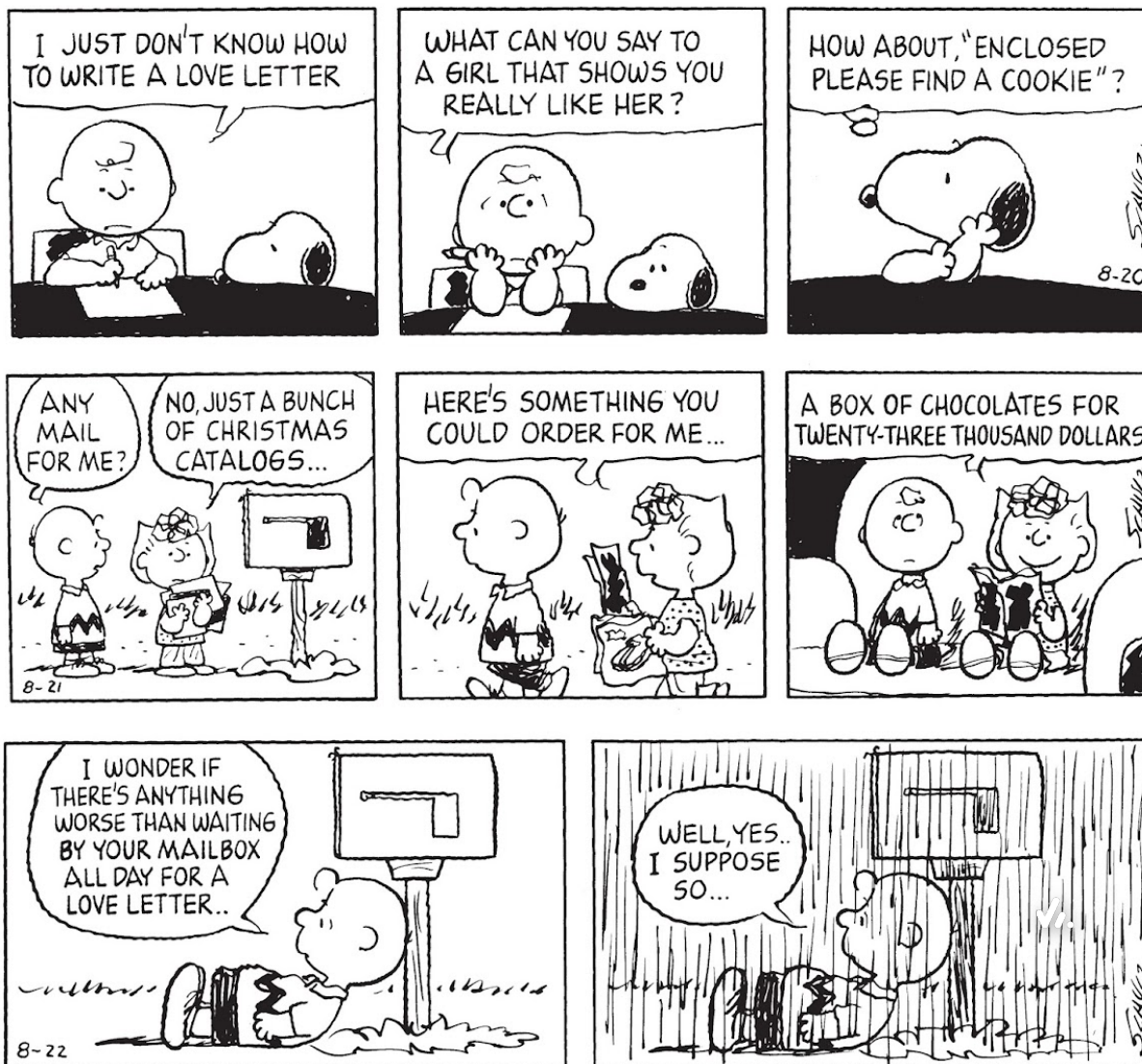
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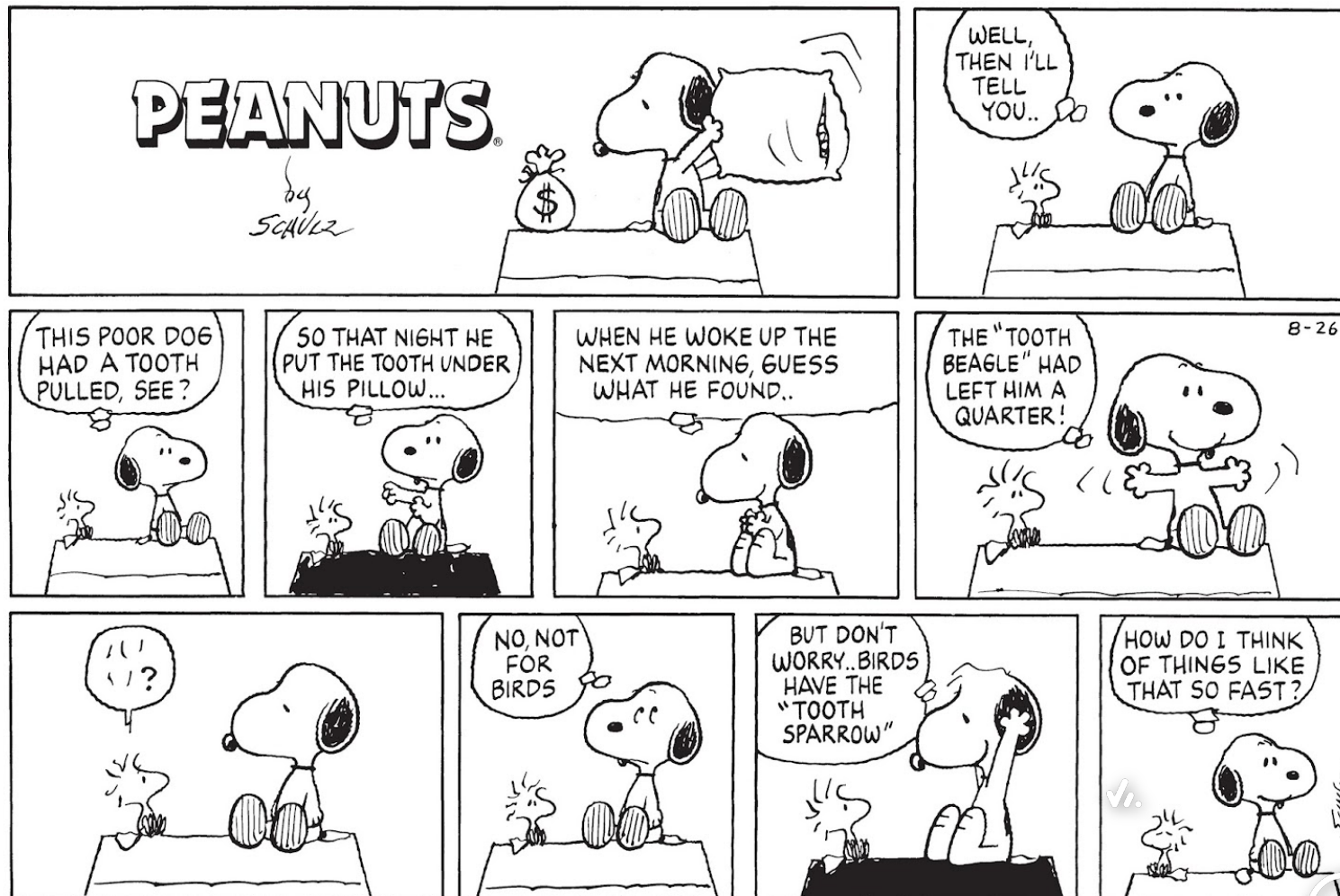


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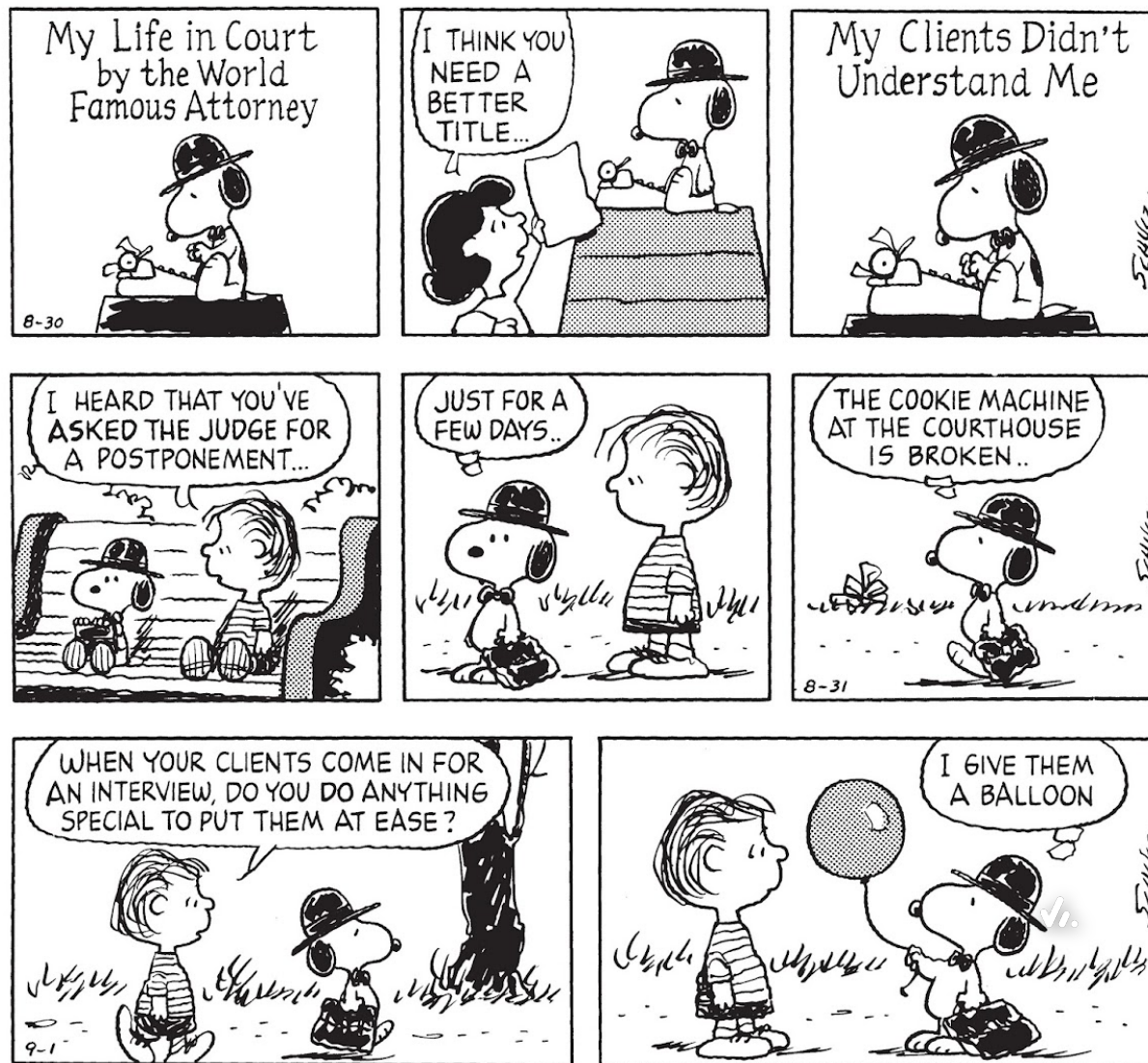
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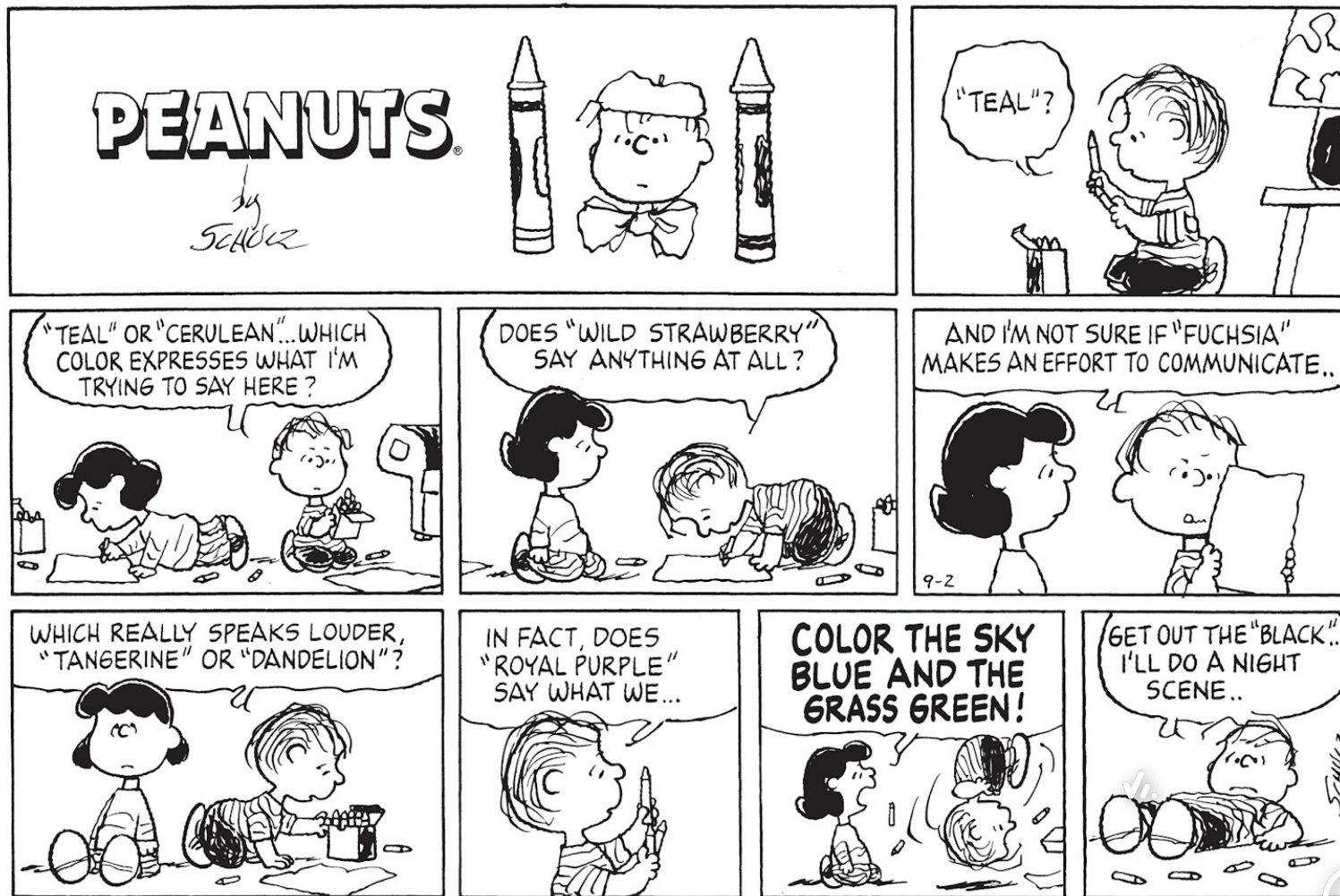




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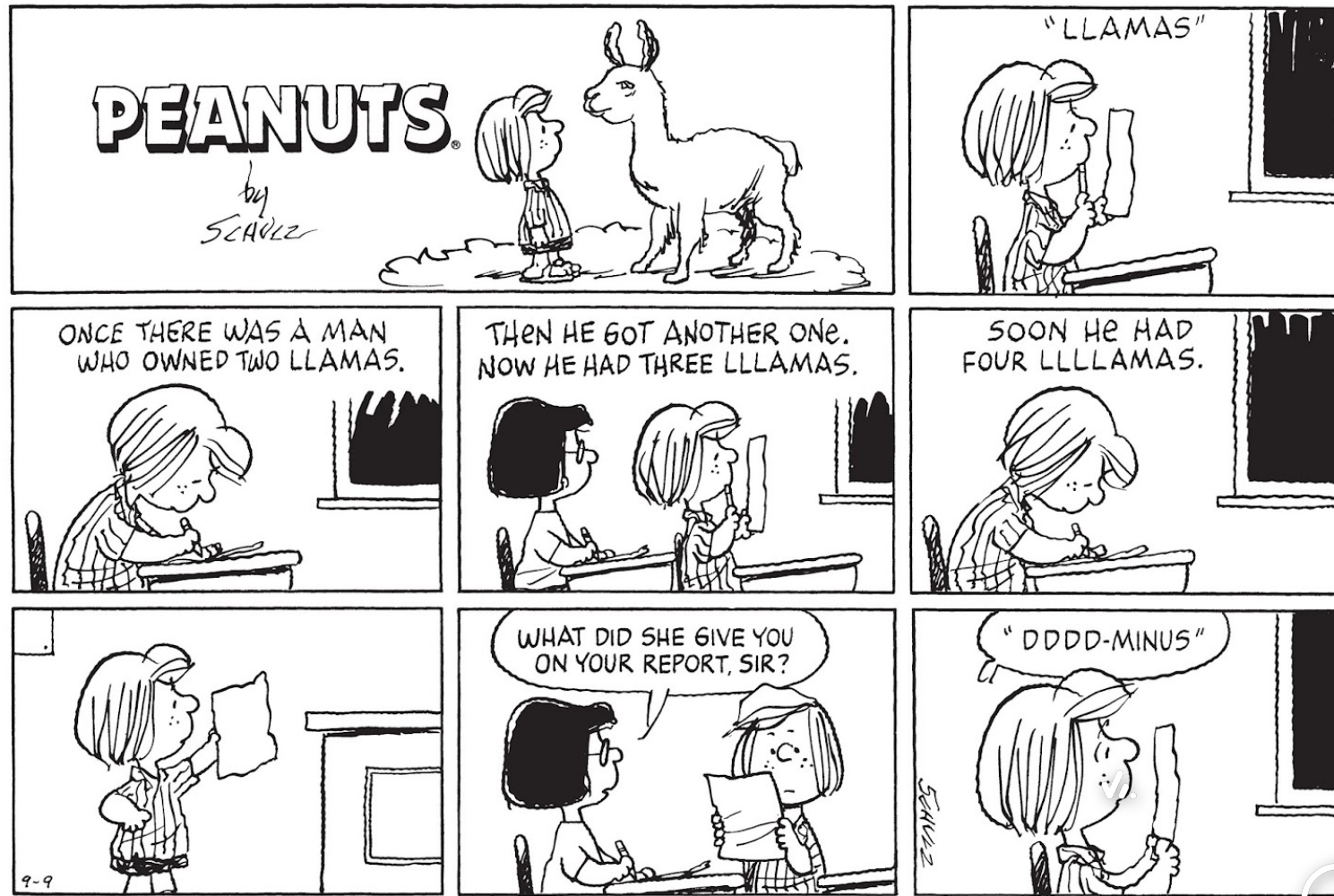


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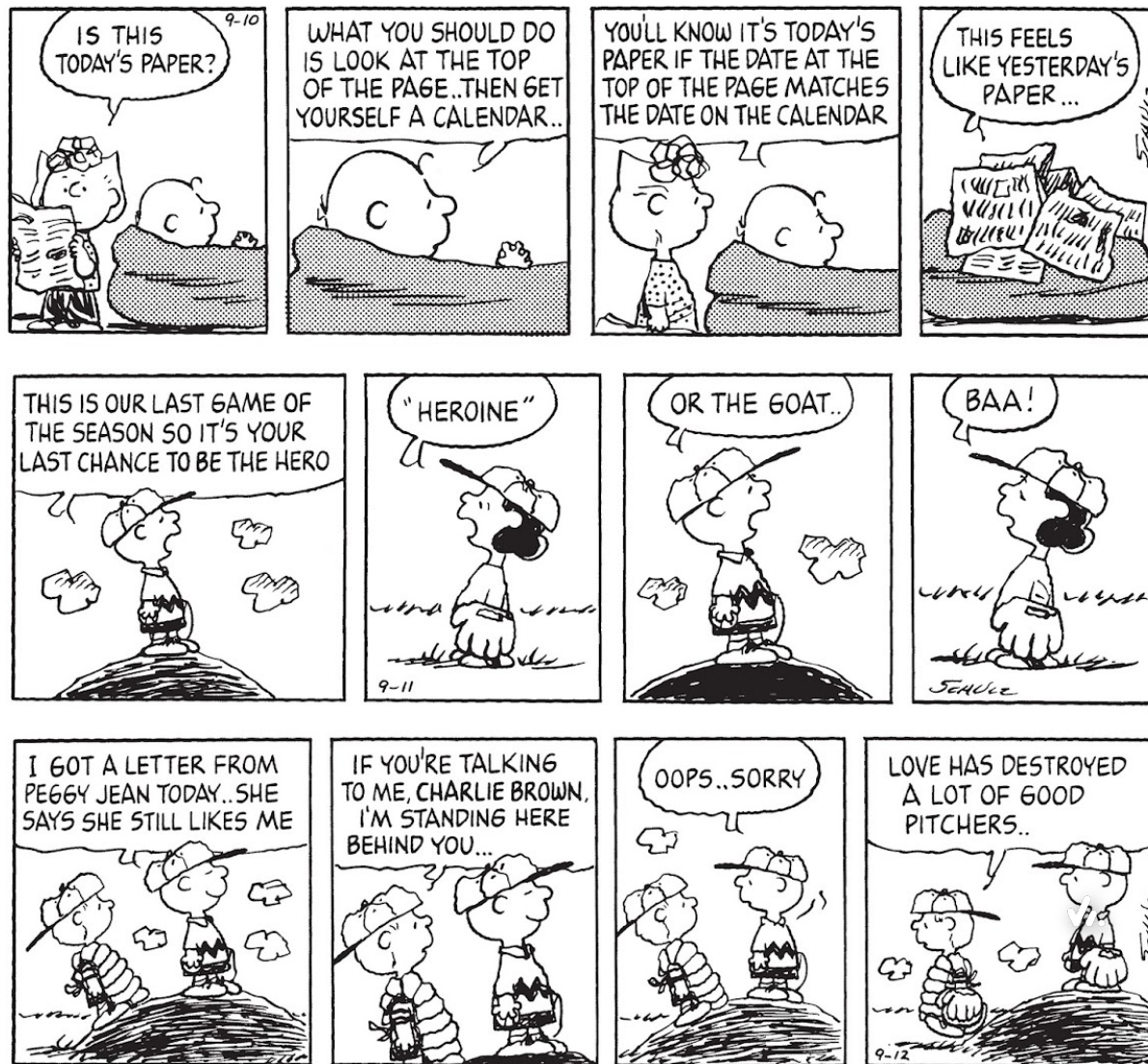
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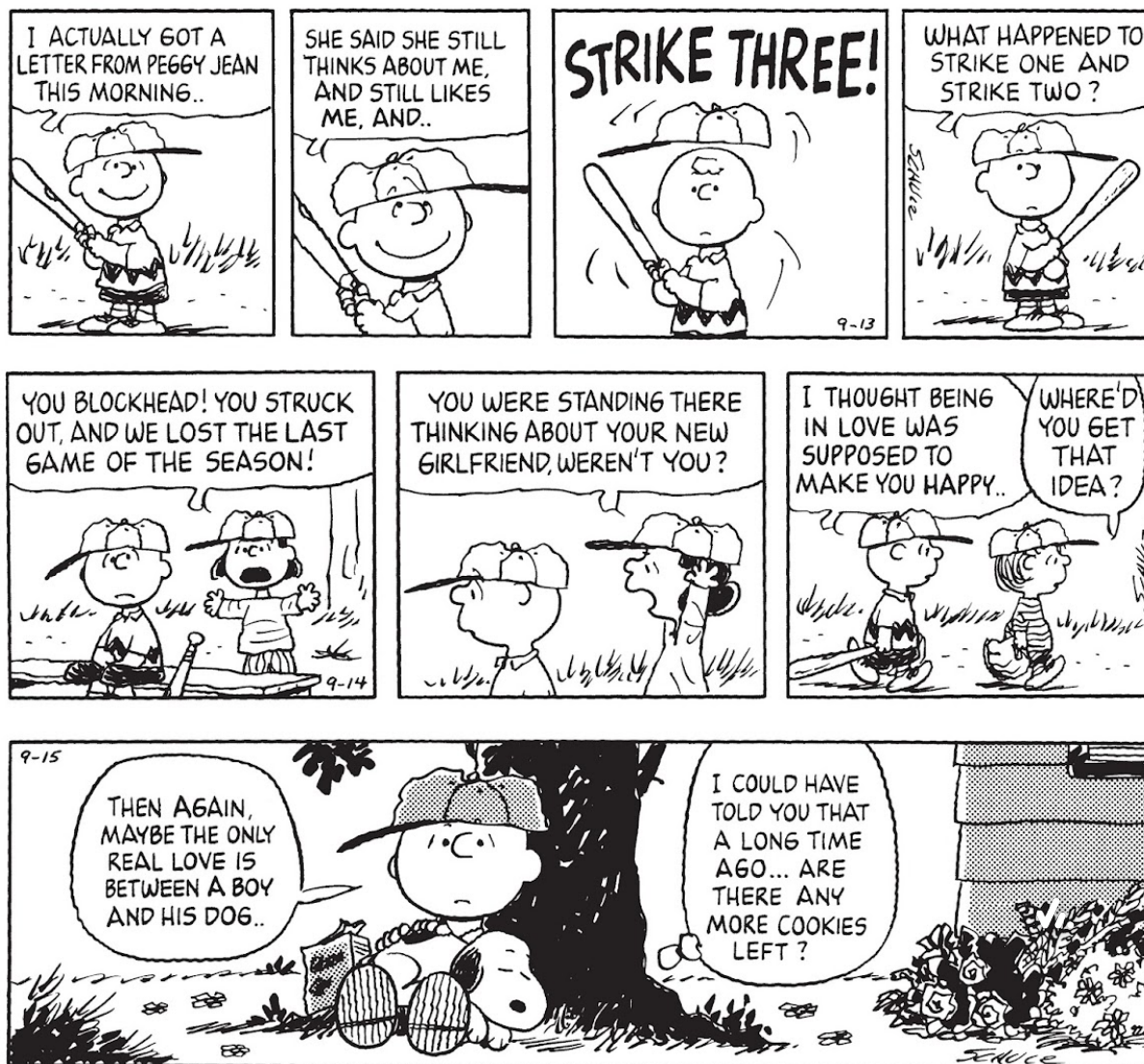


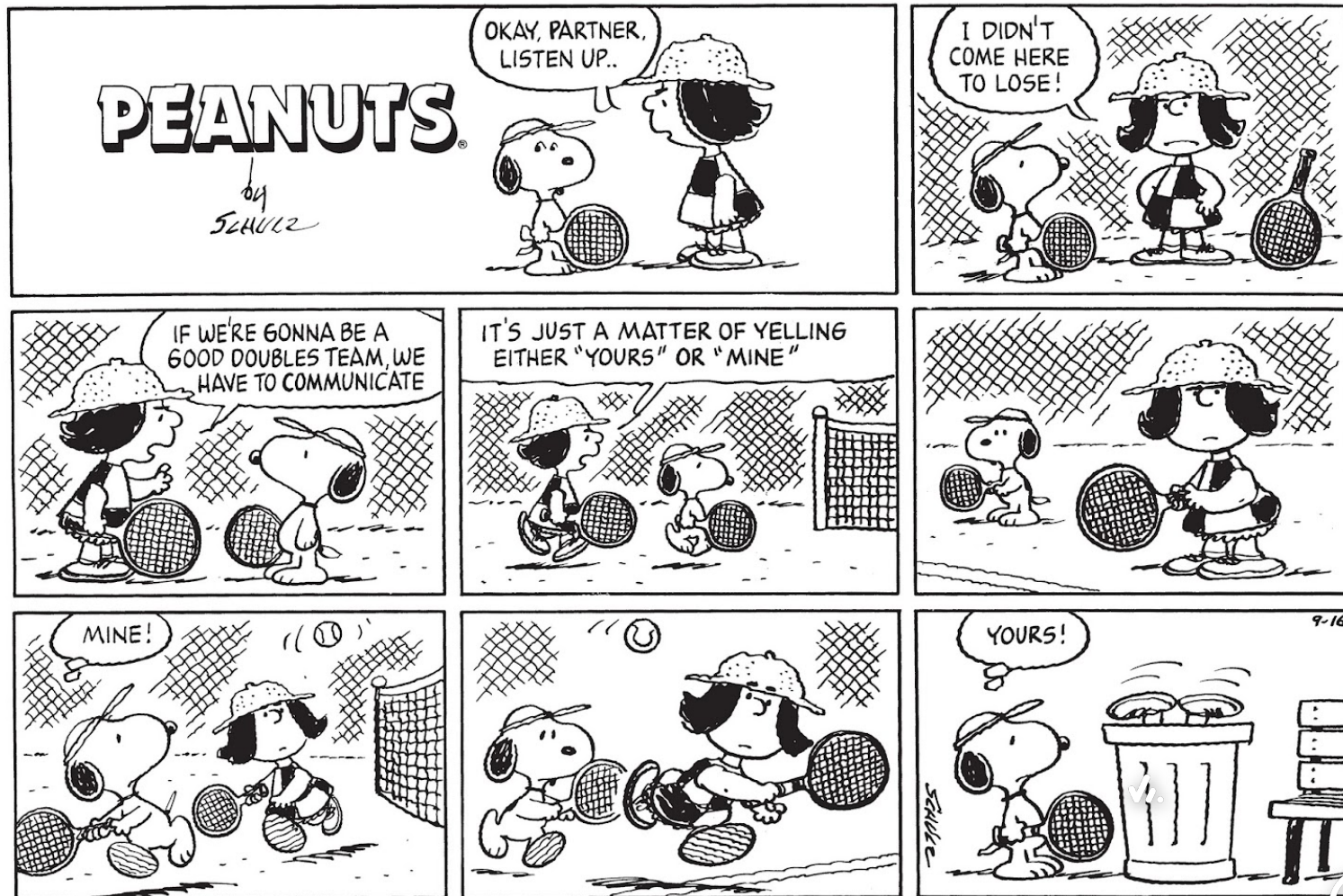


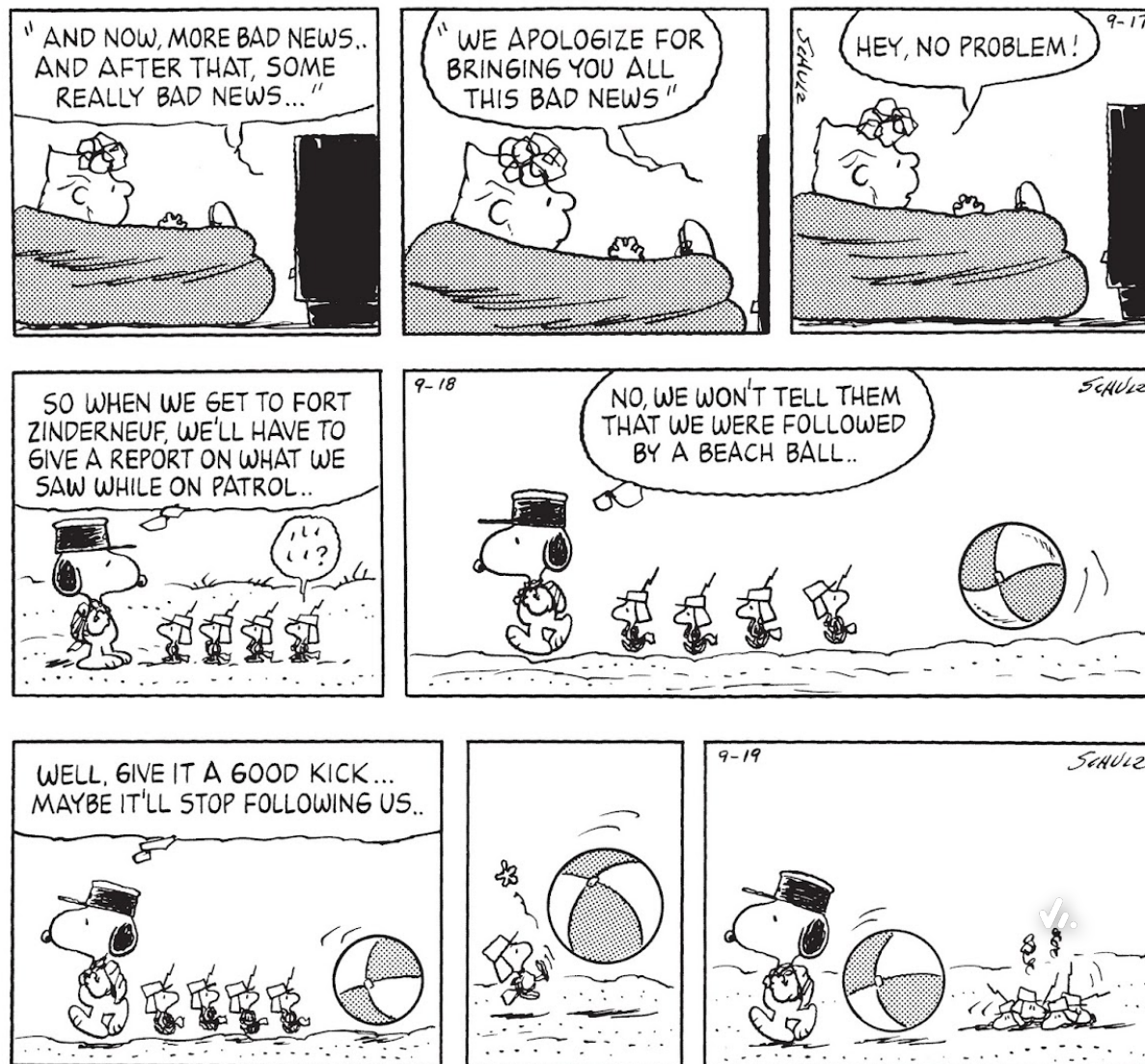
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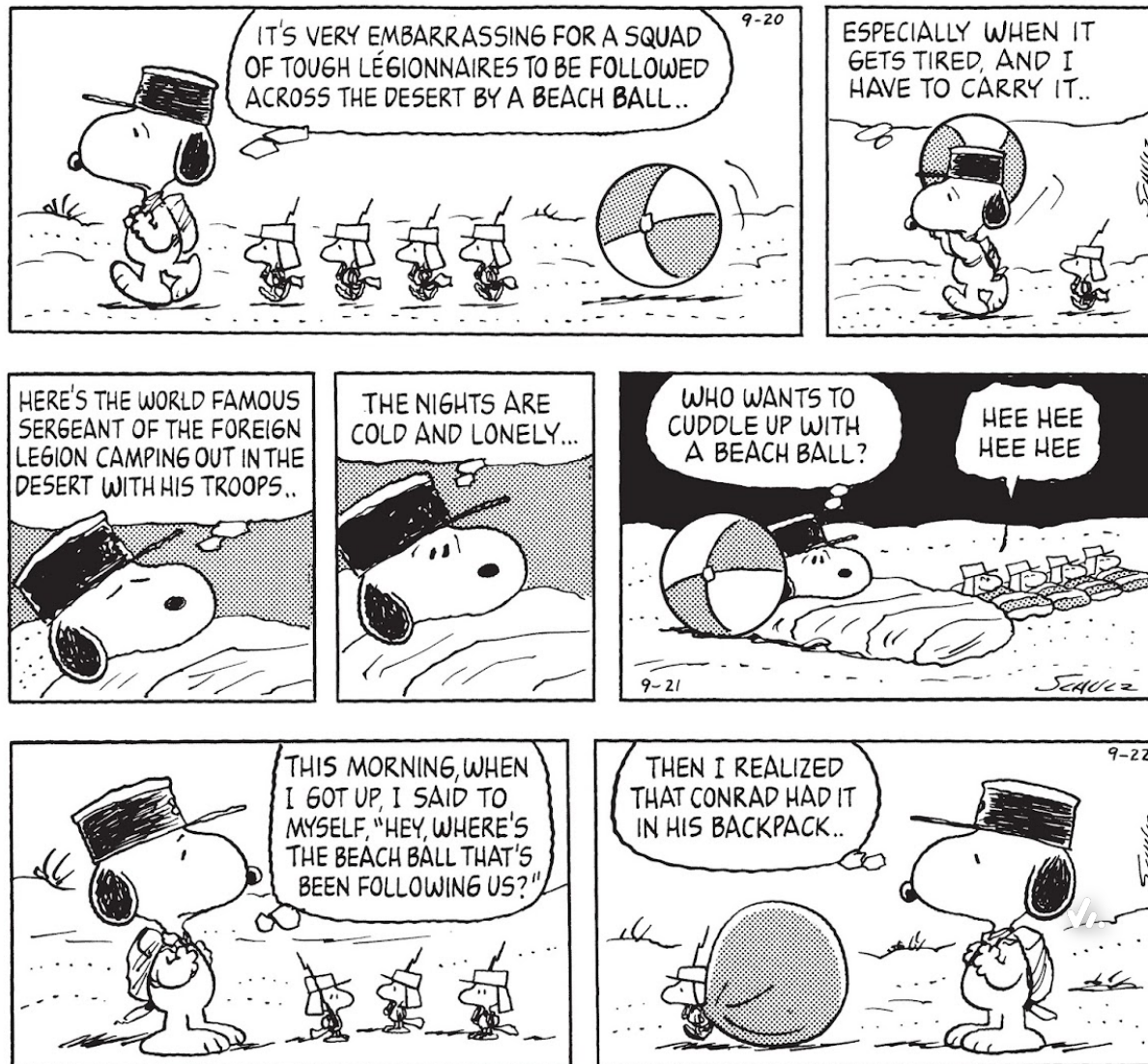


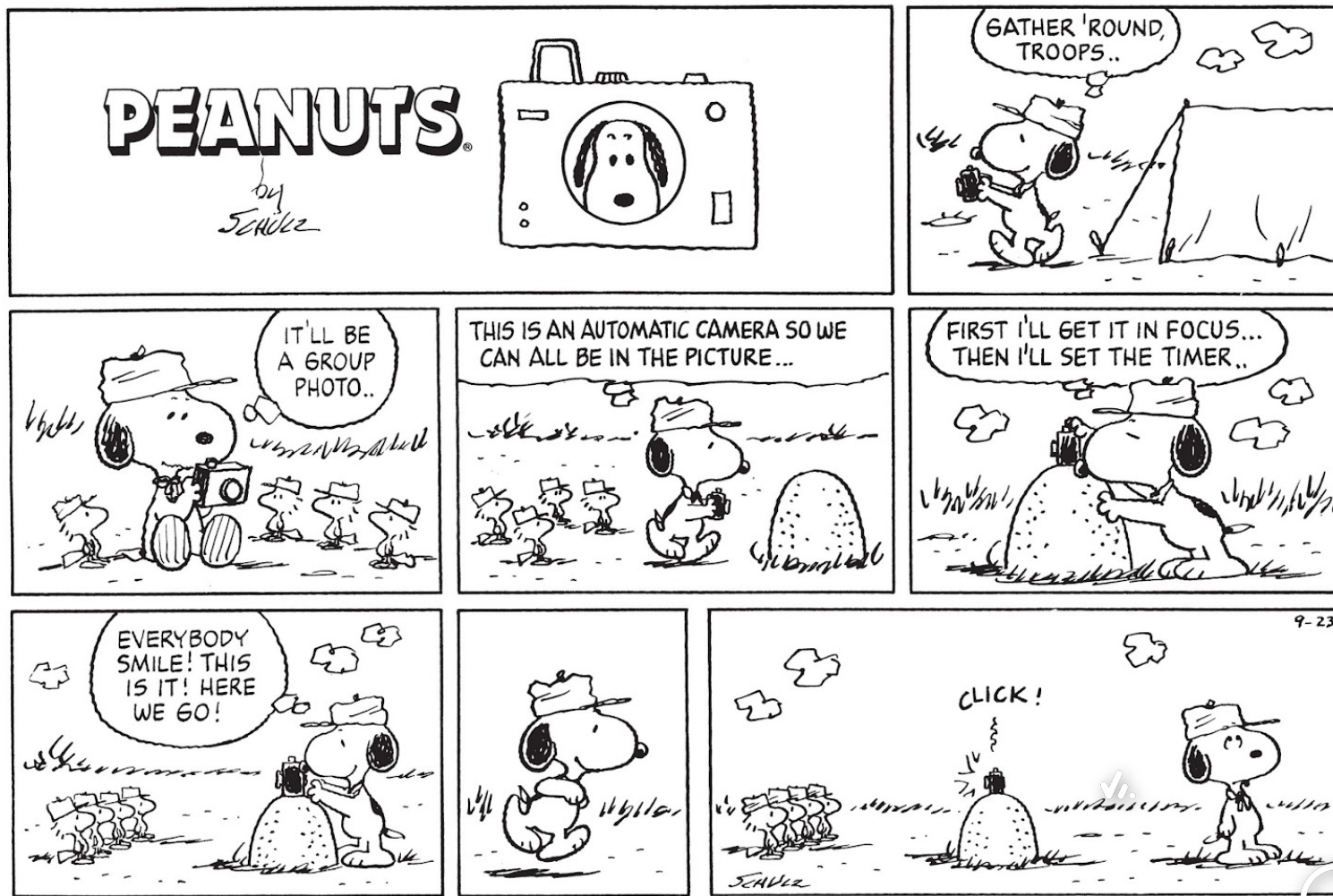


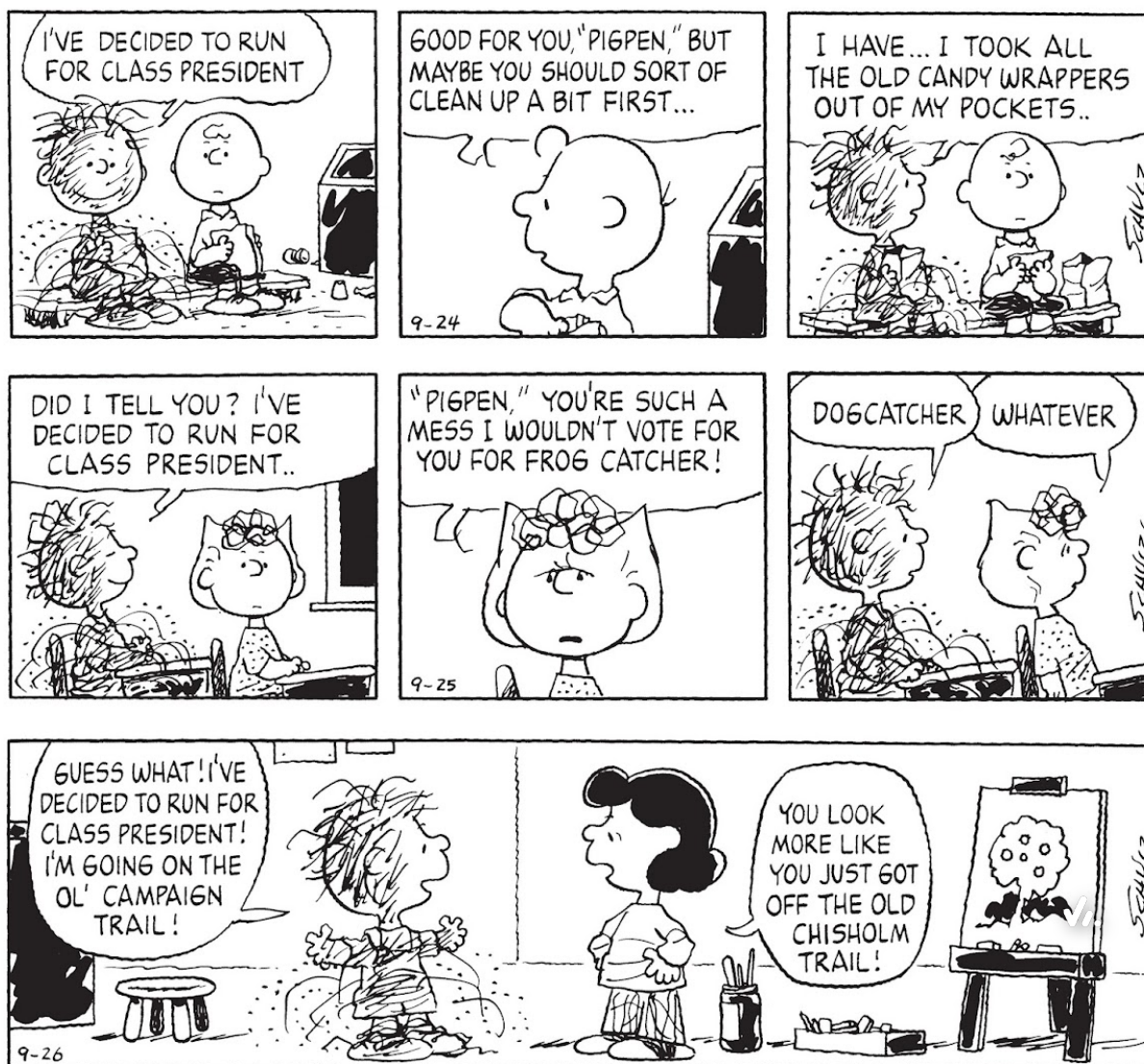
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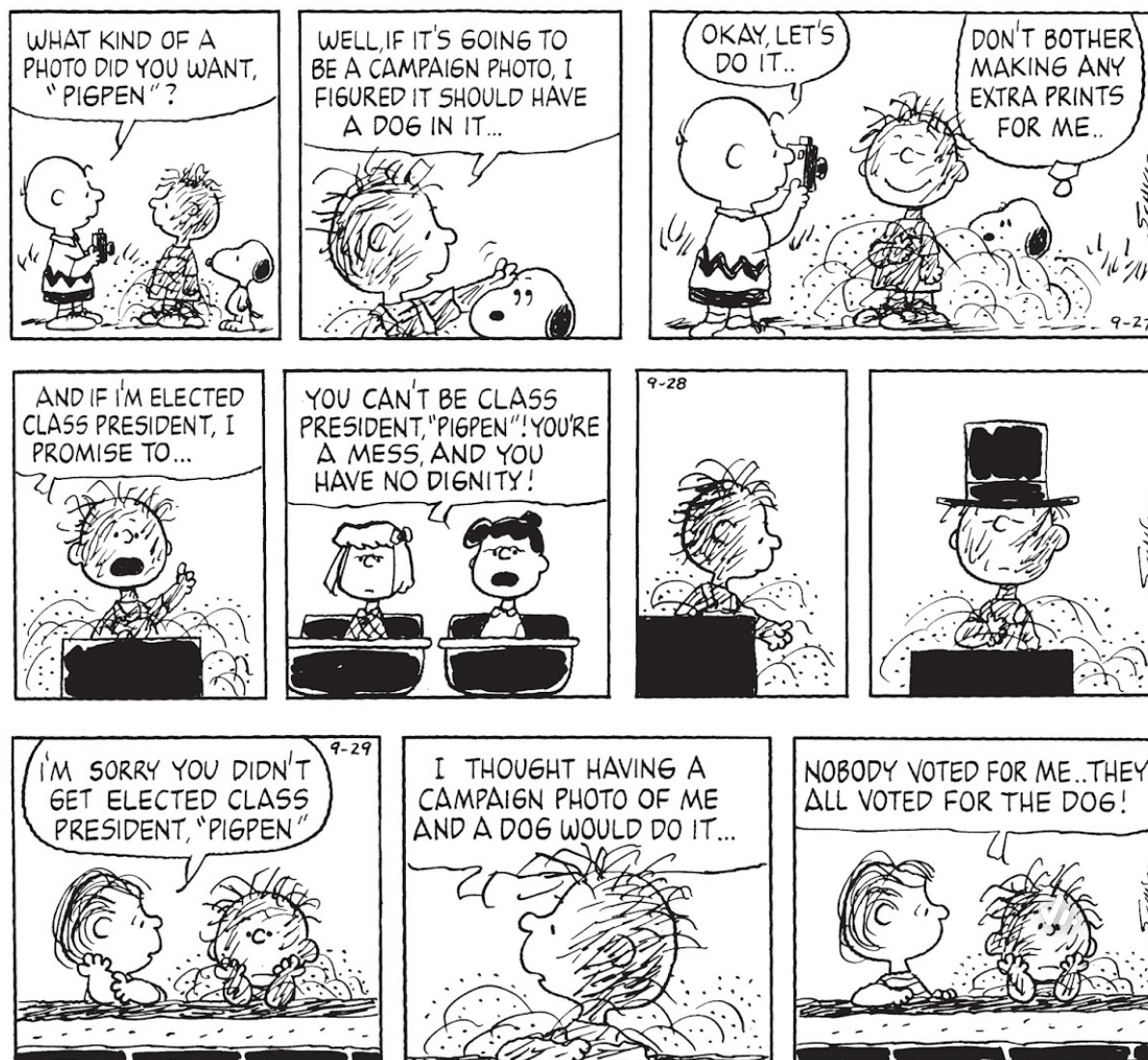
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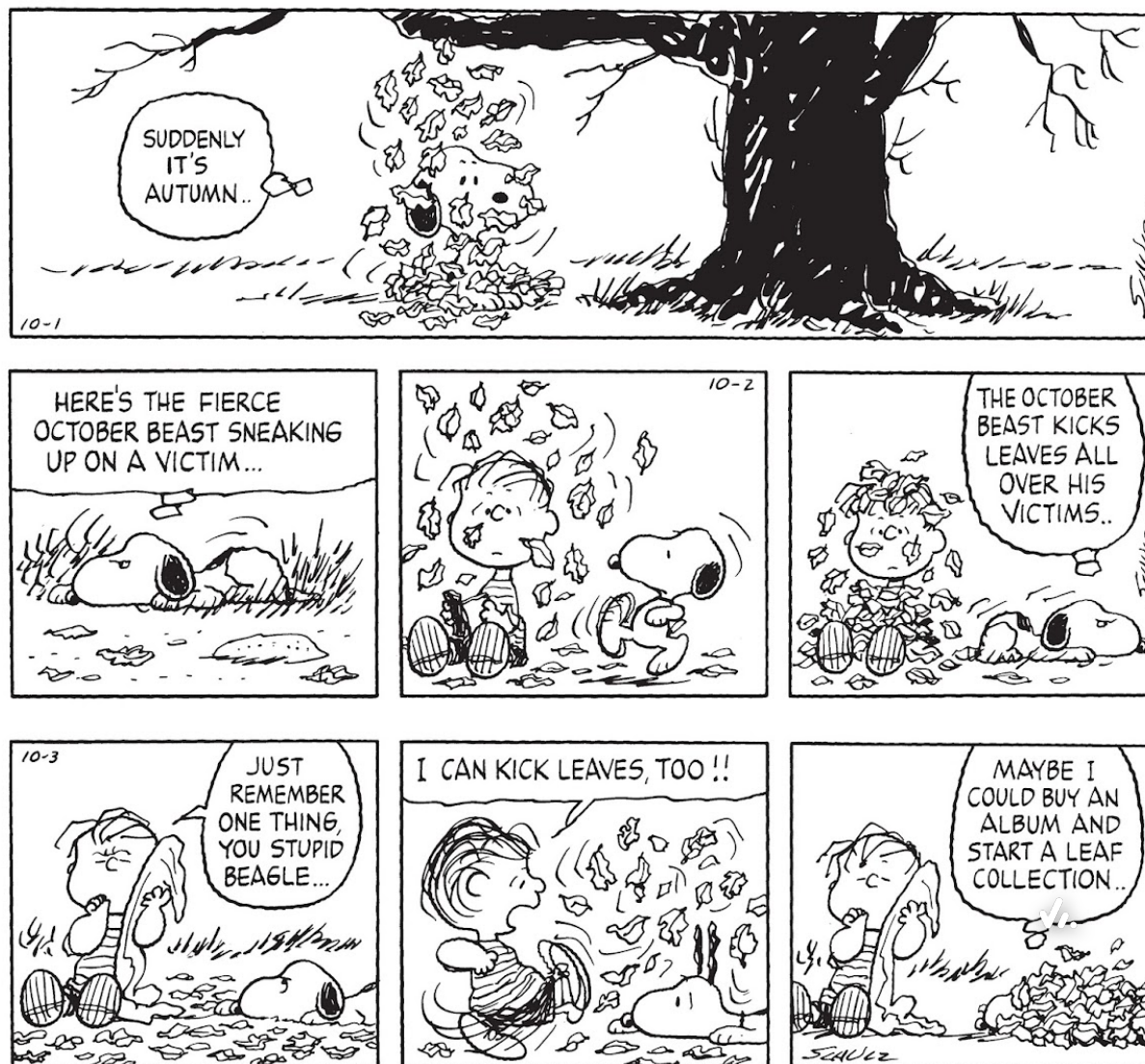




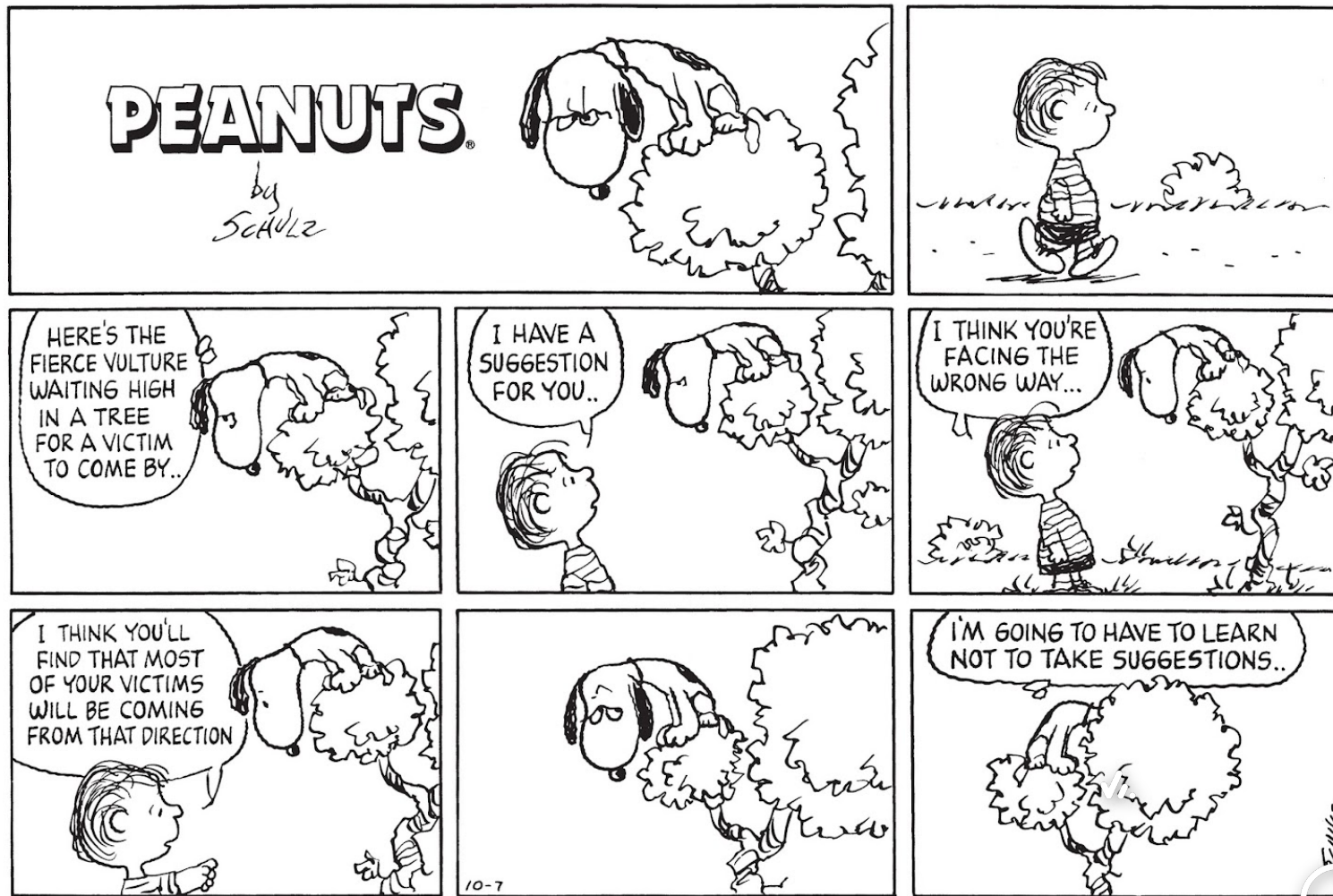






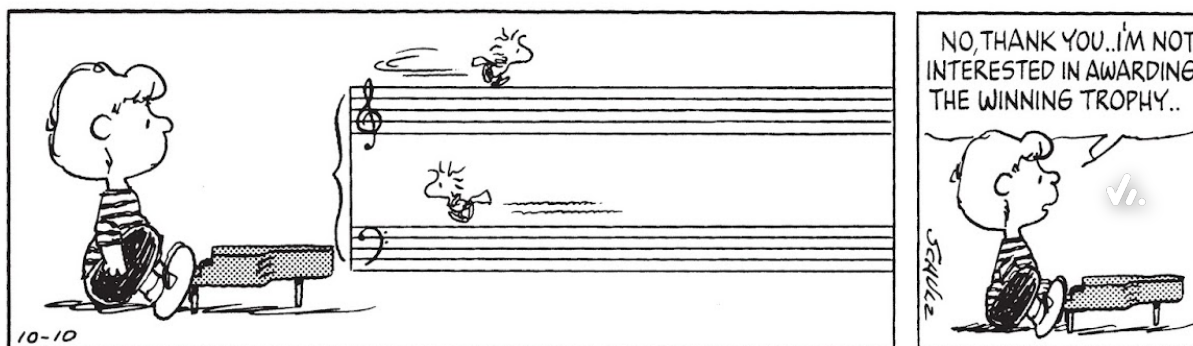
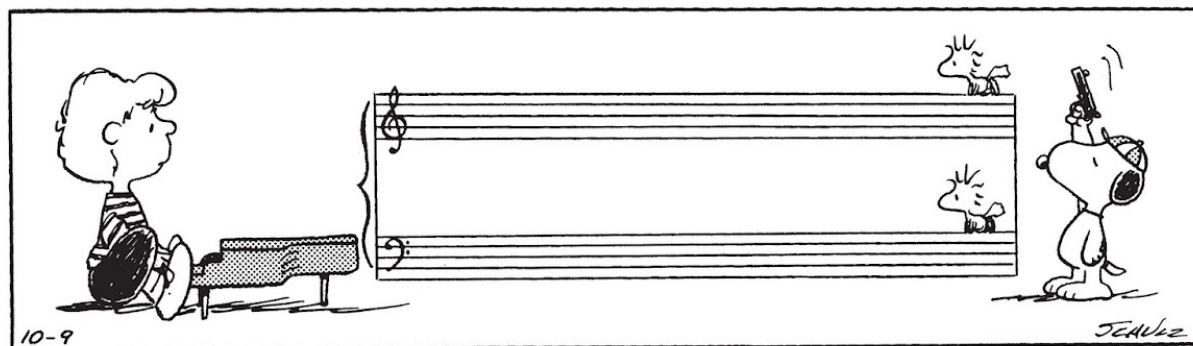




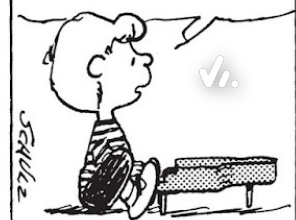


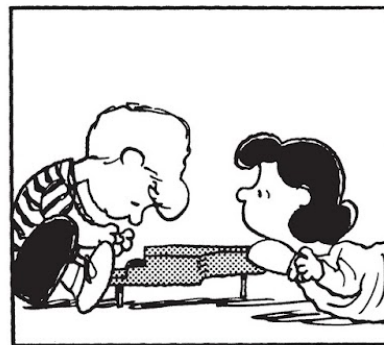
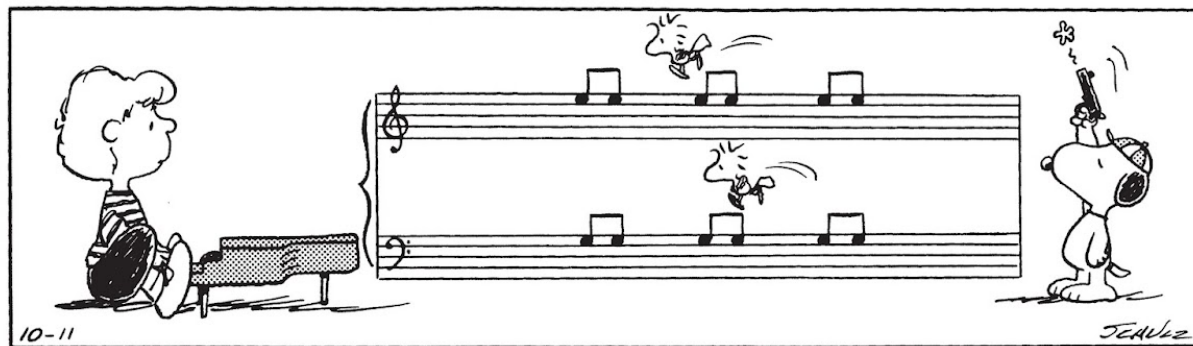
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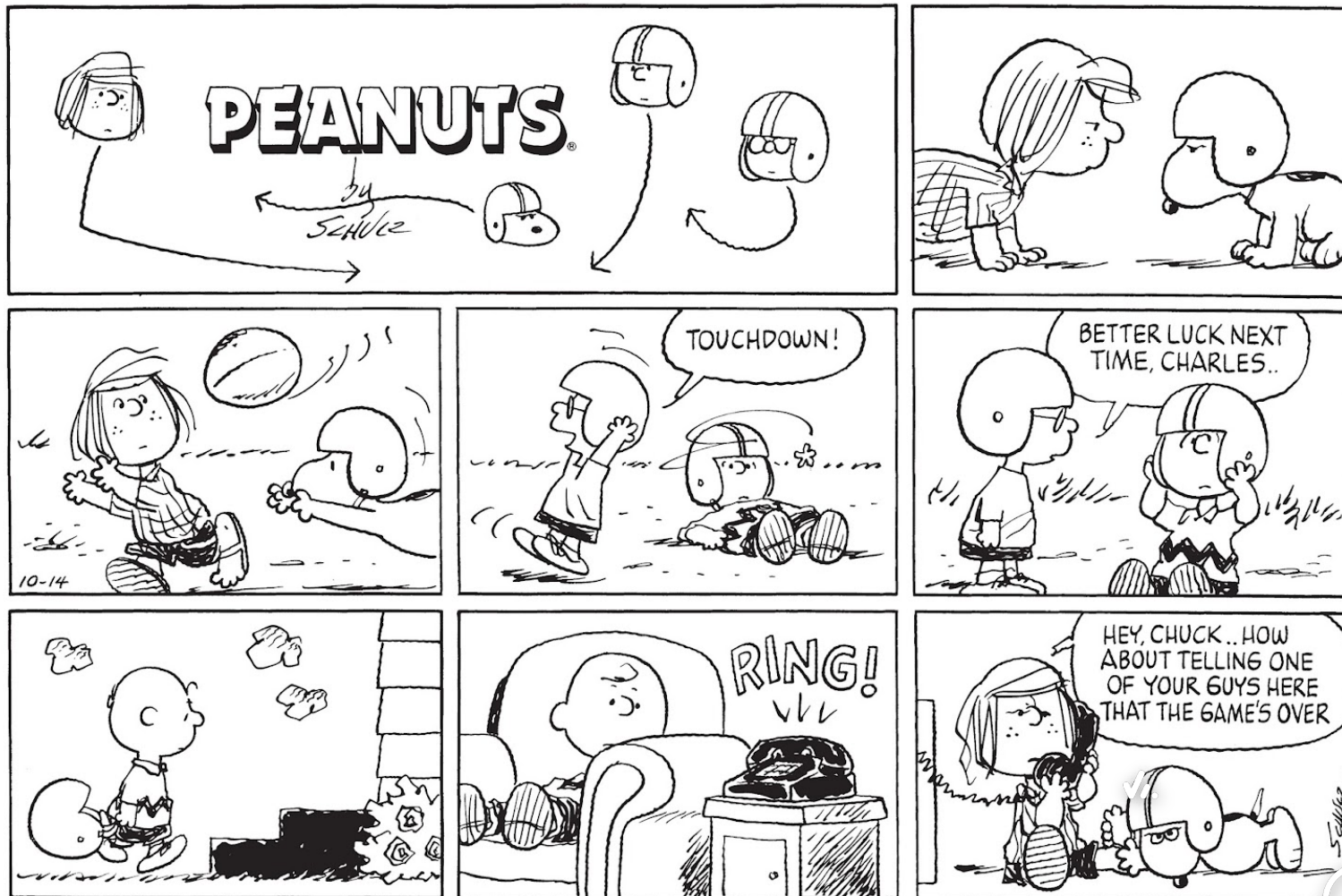
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NO, THANK YOU..I'M NOT
INTERESTED IN AWARDING
THE WINNING TROPHY..

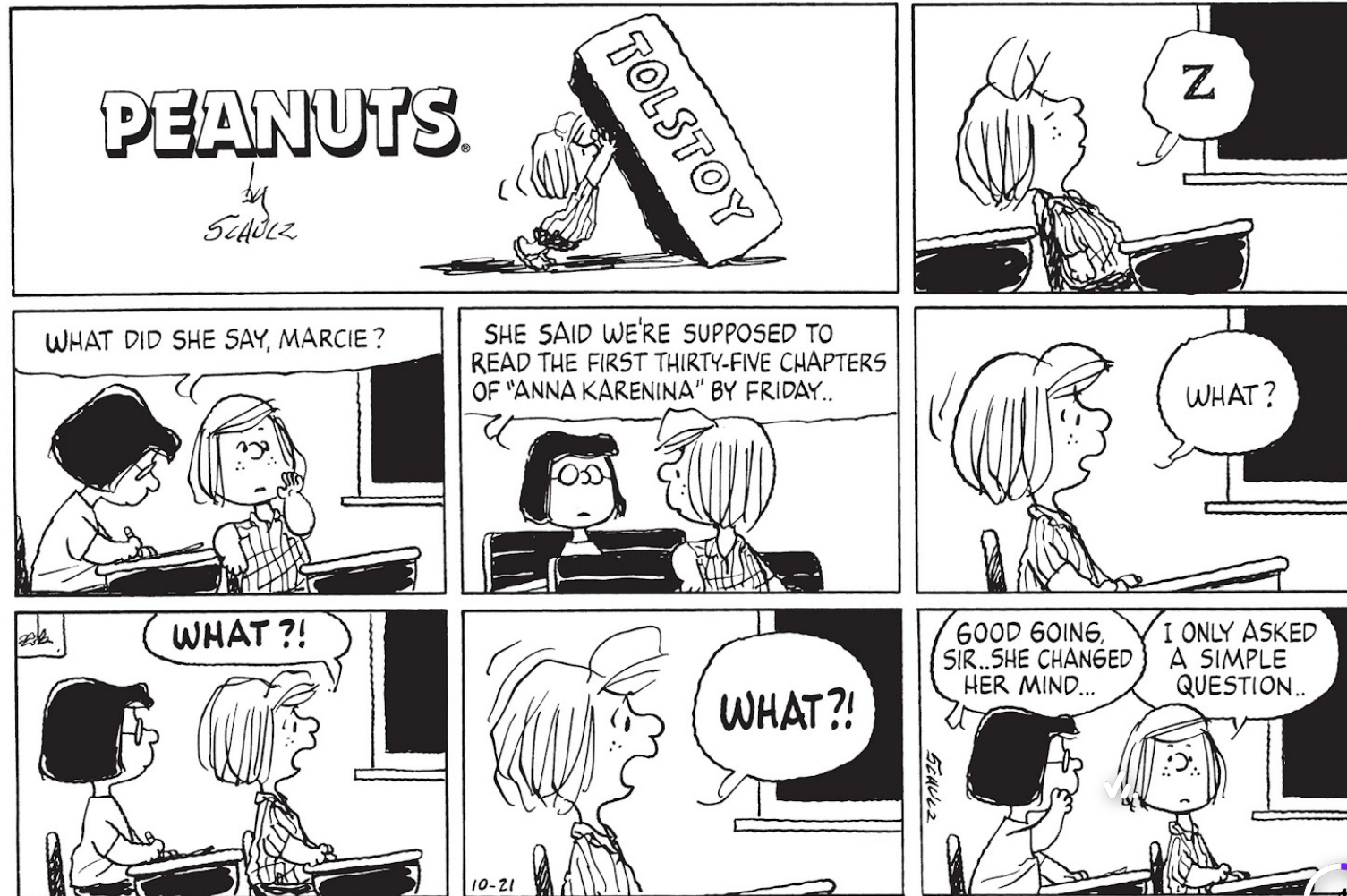






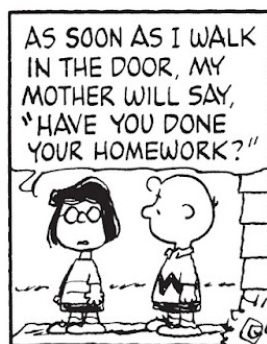
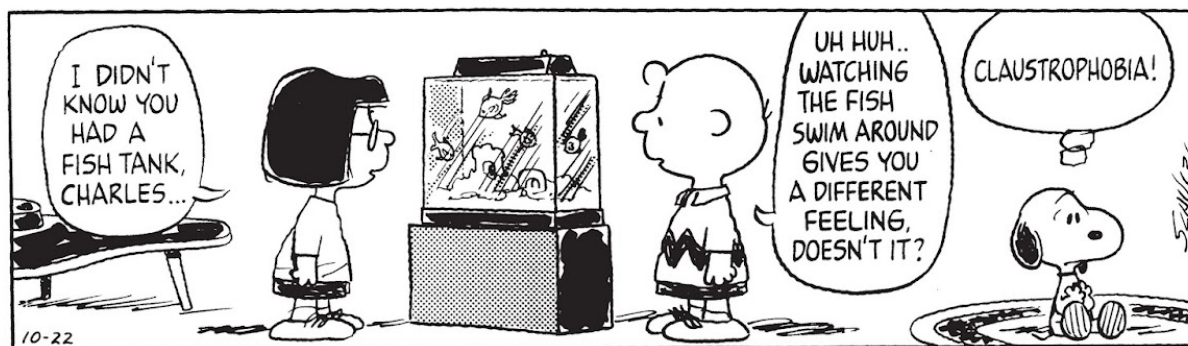


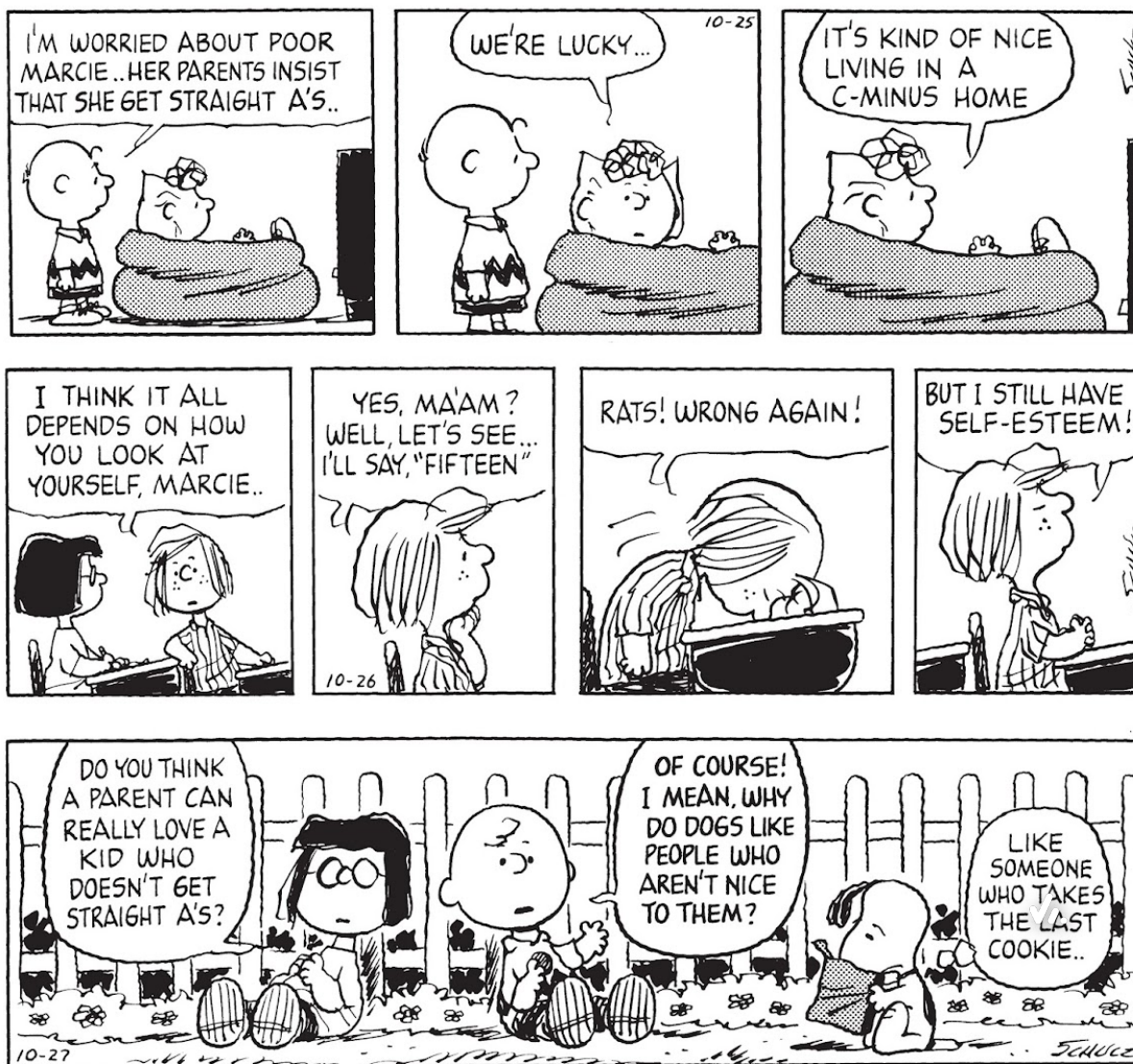




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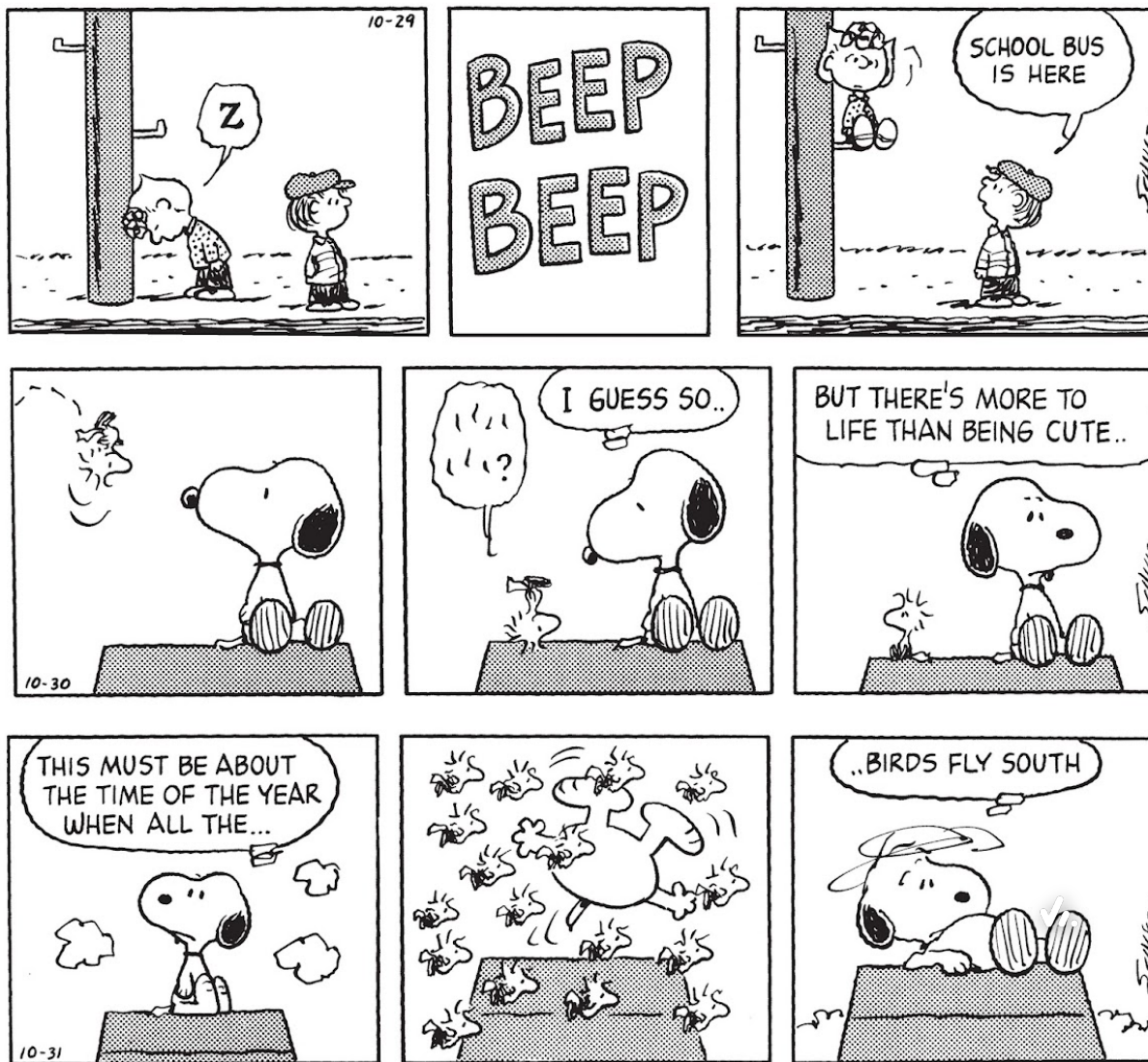


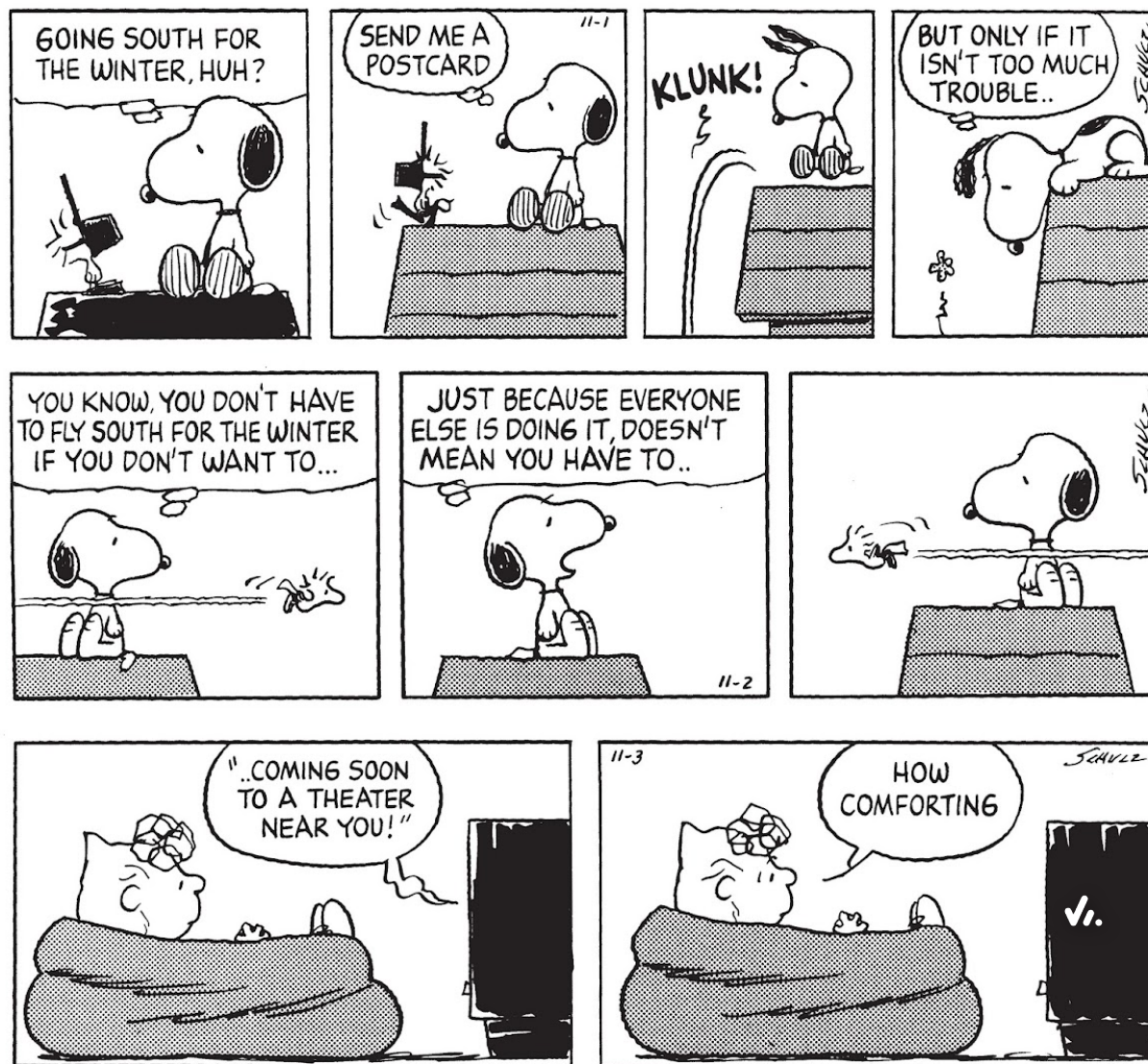
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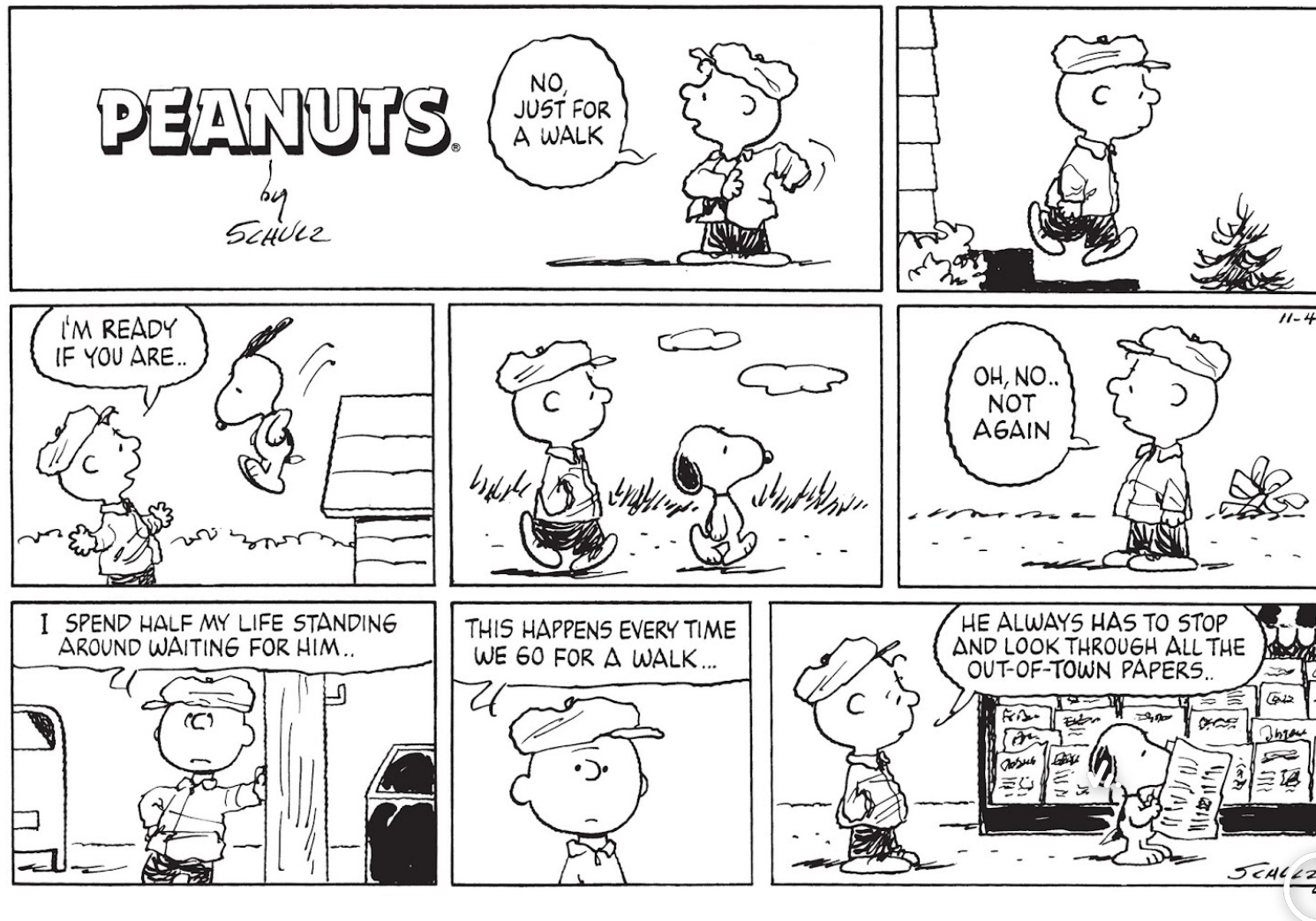
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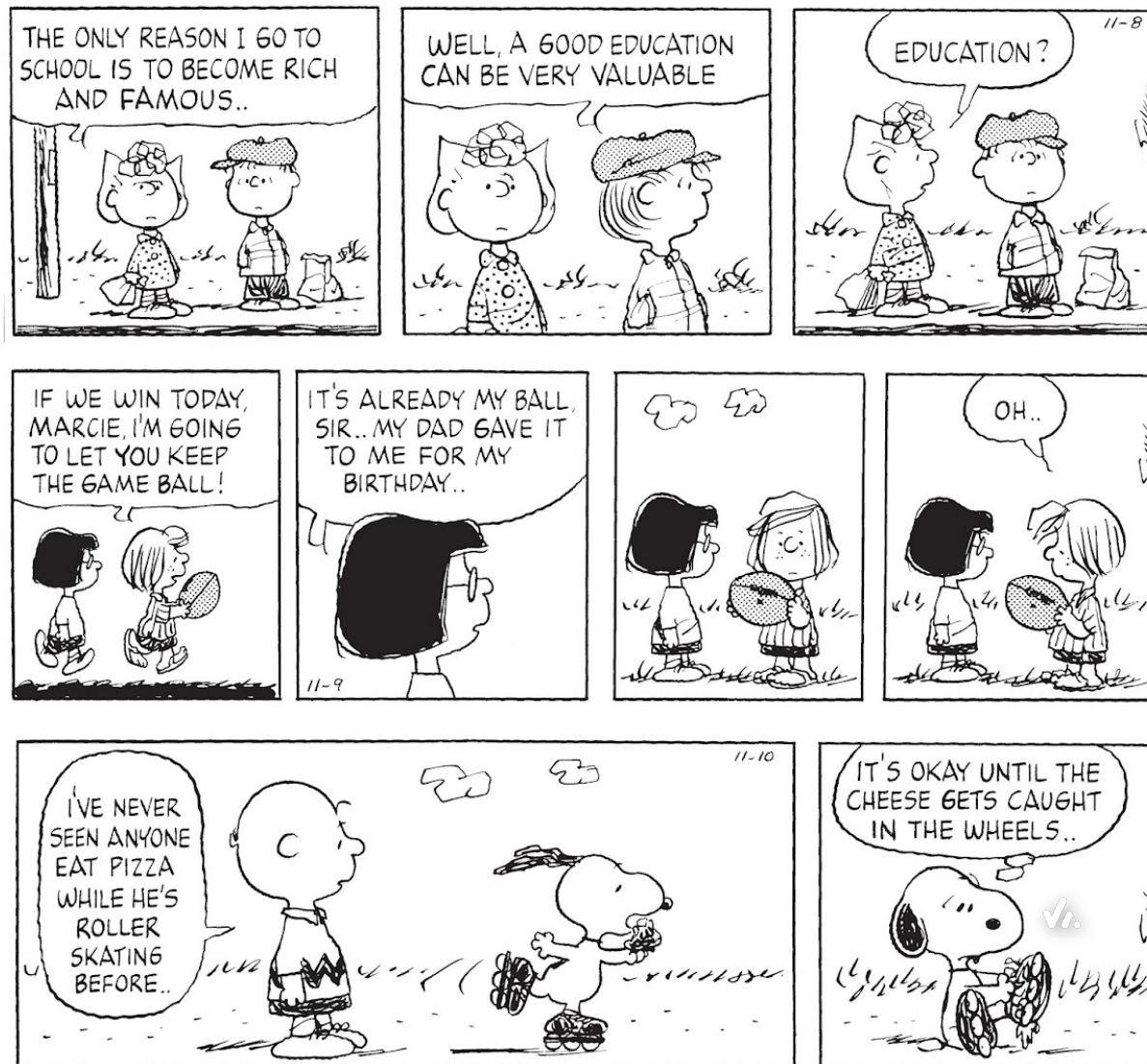


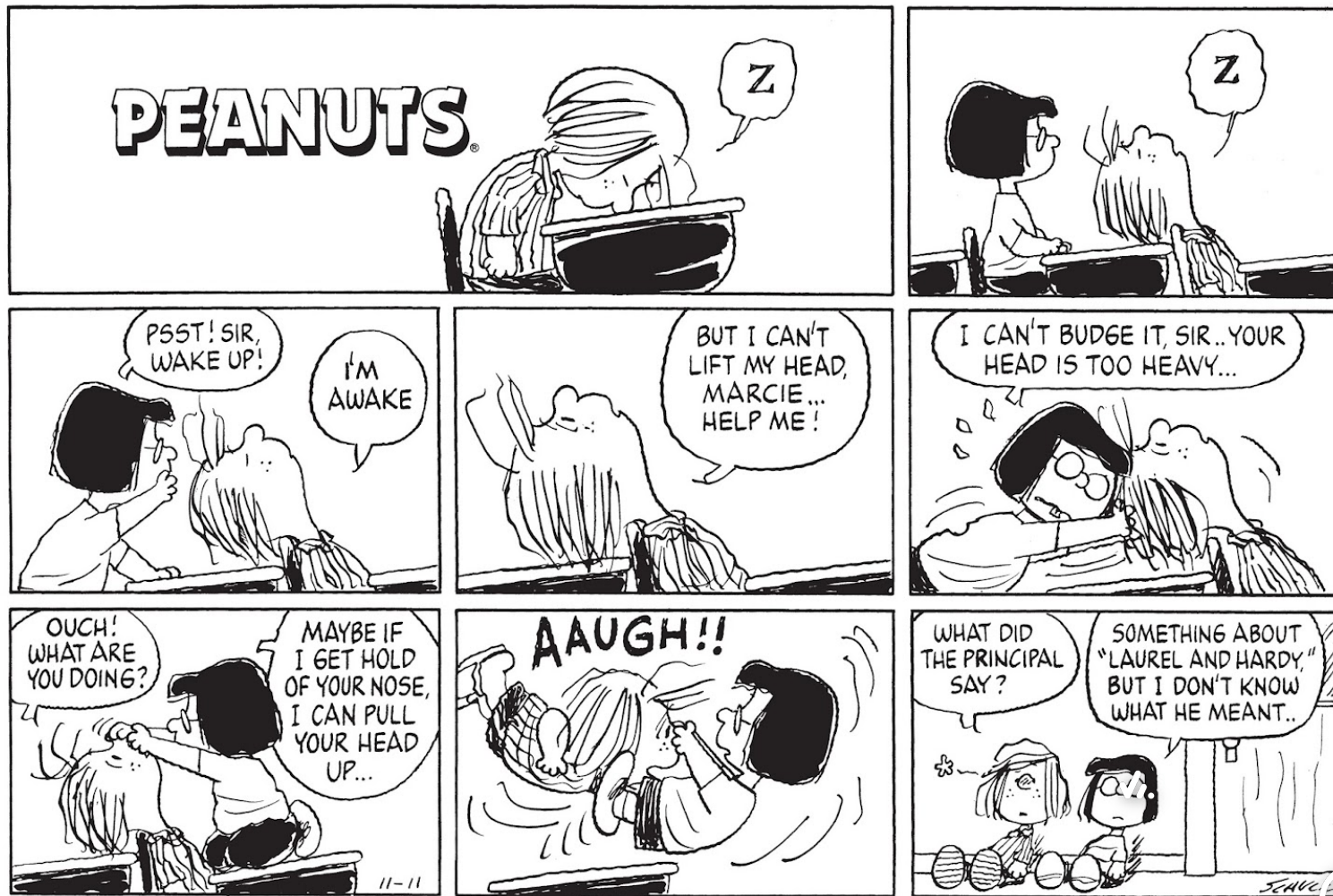


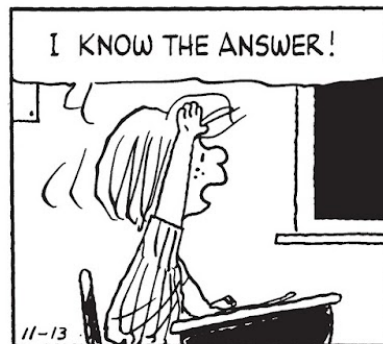
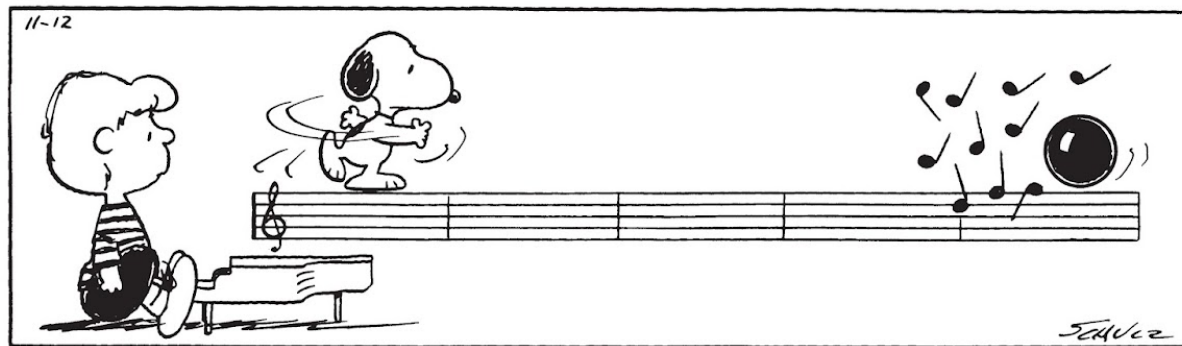


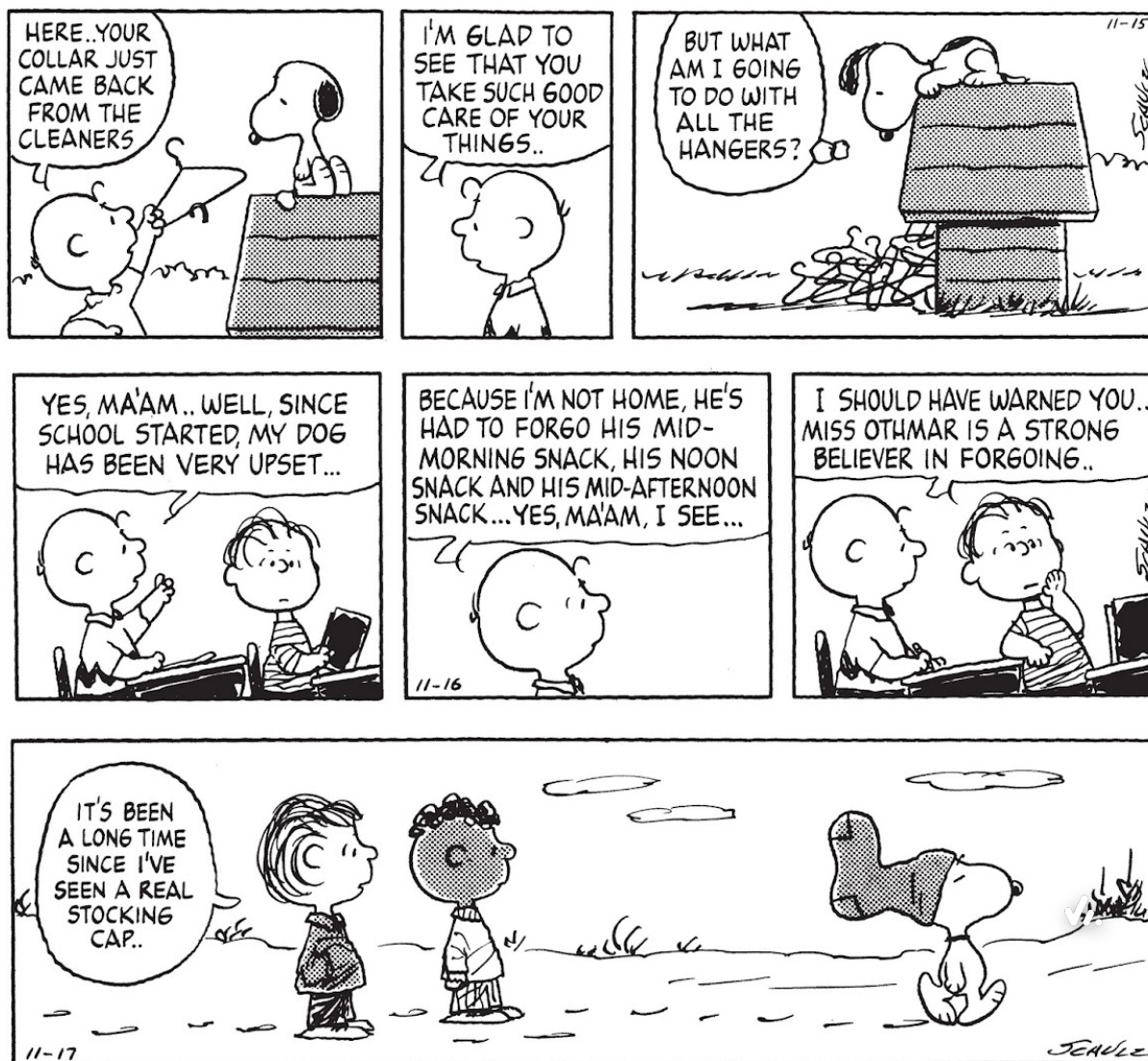


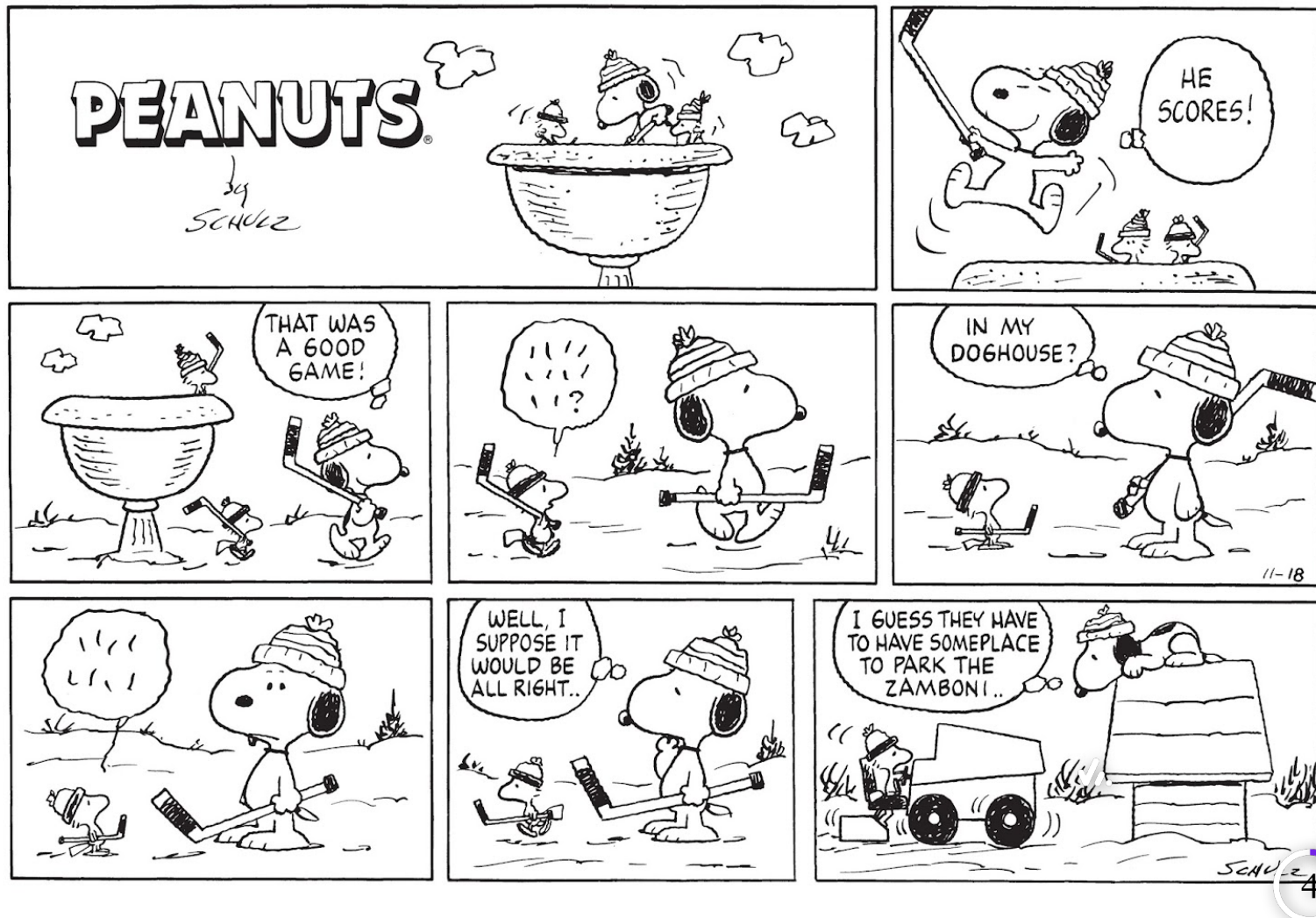








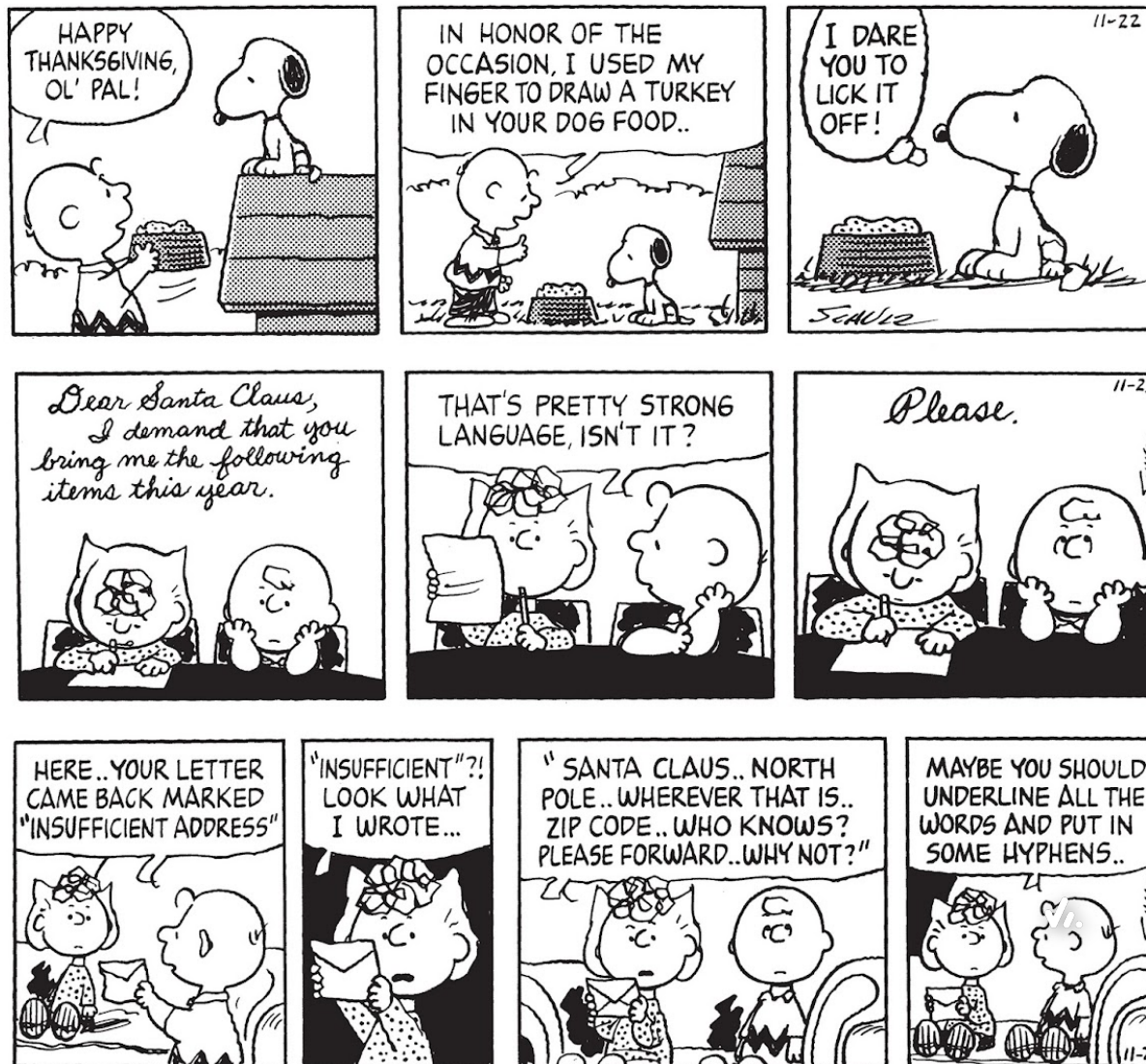




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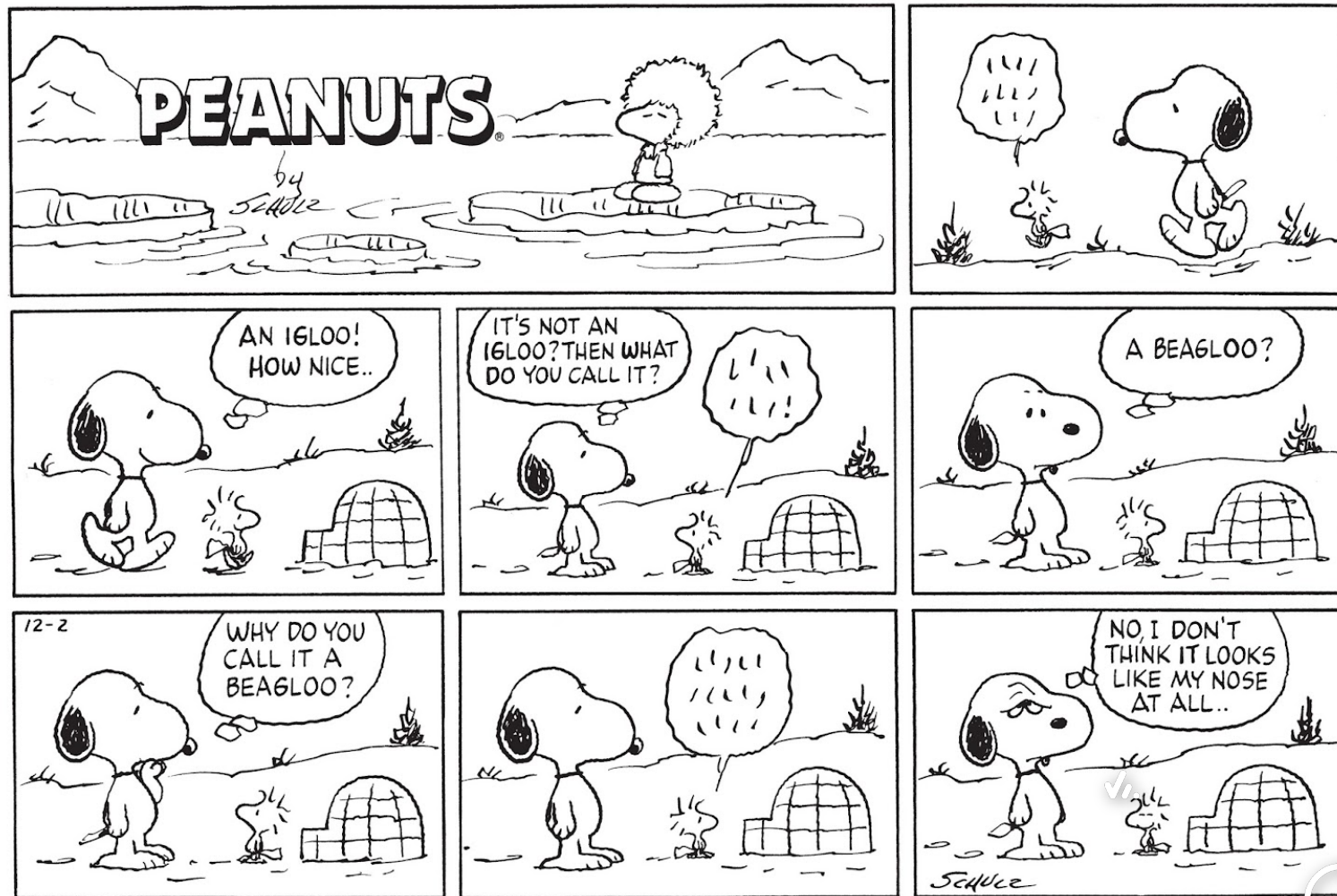


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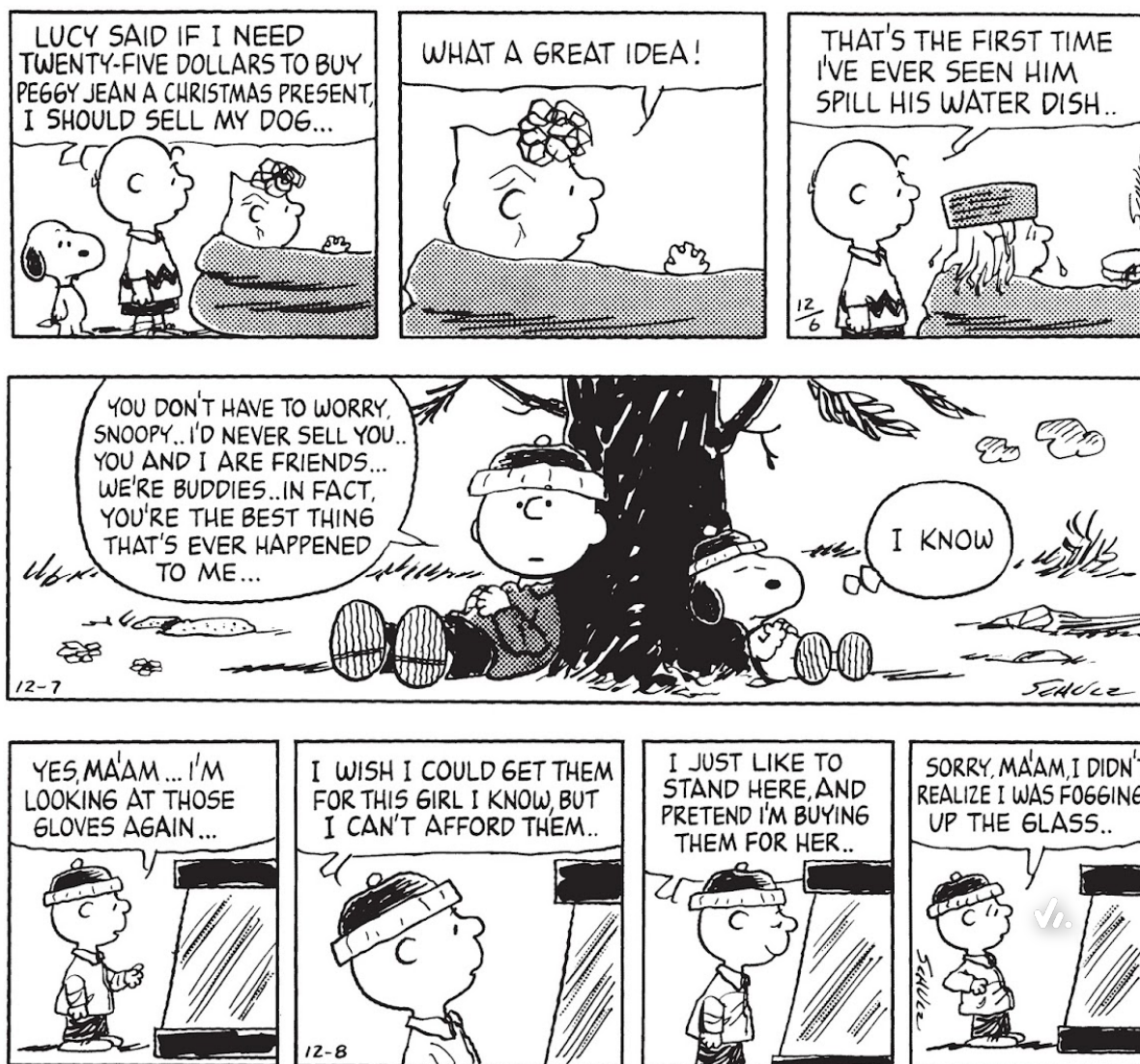


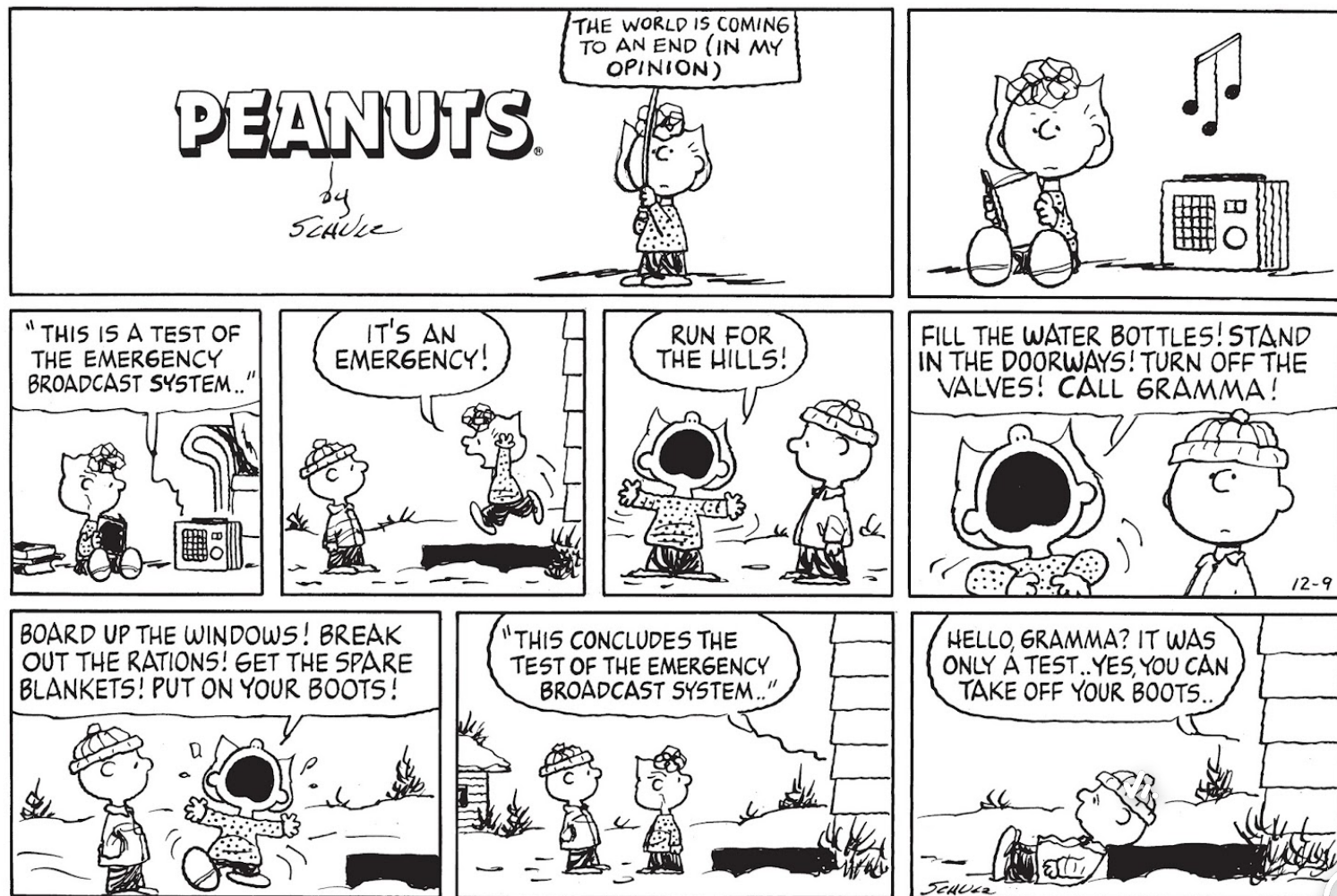


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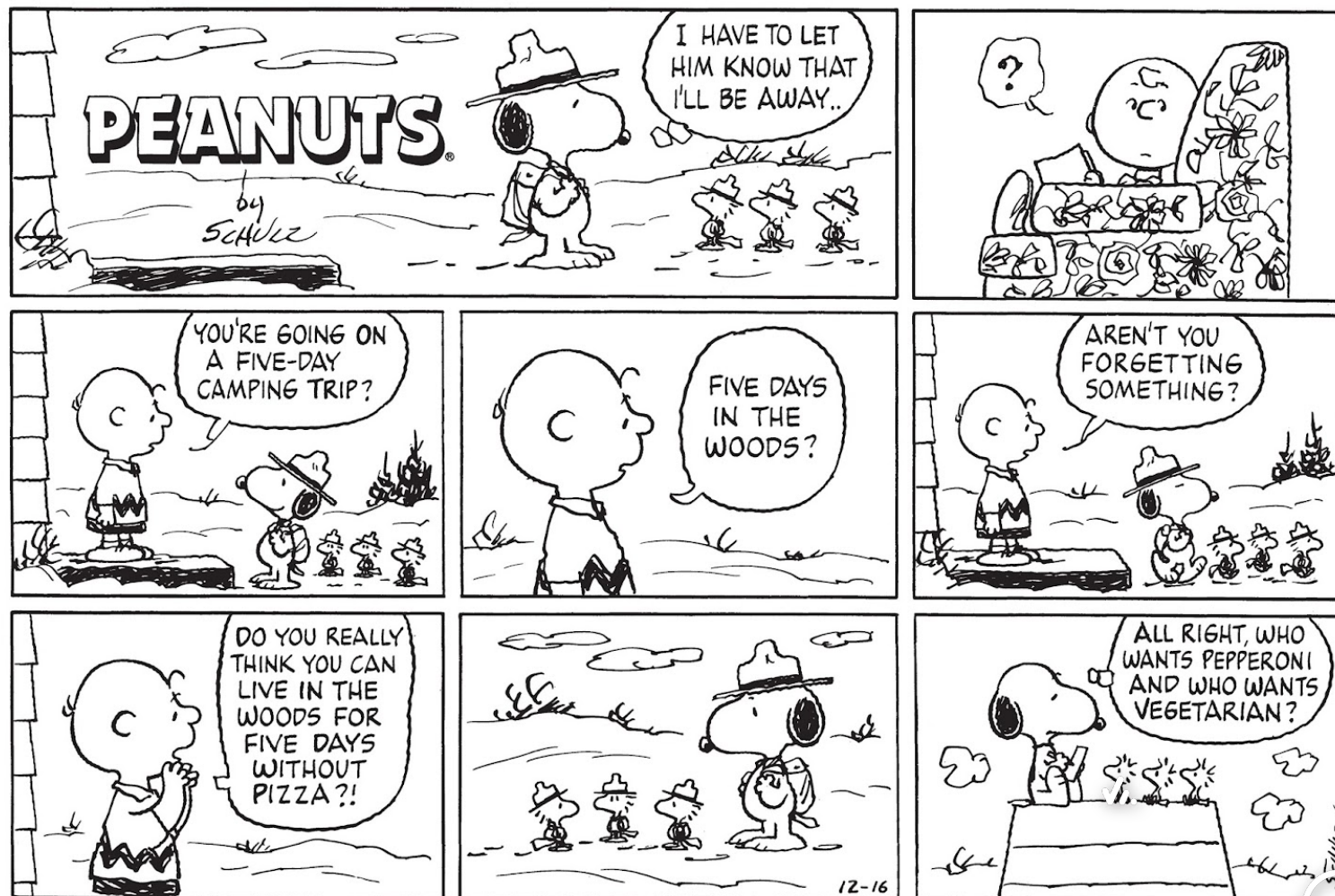












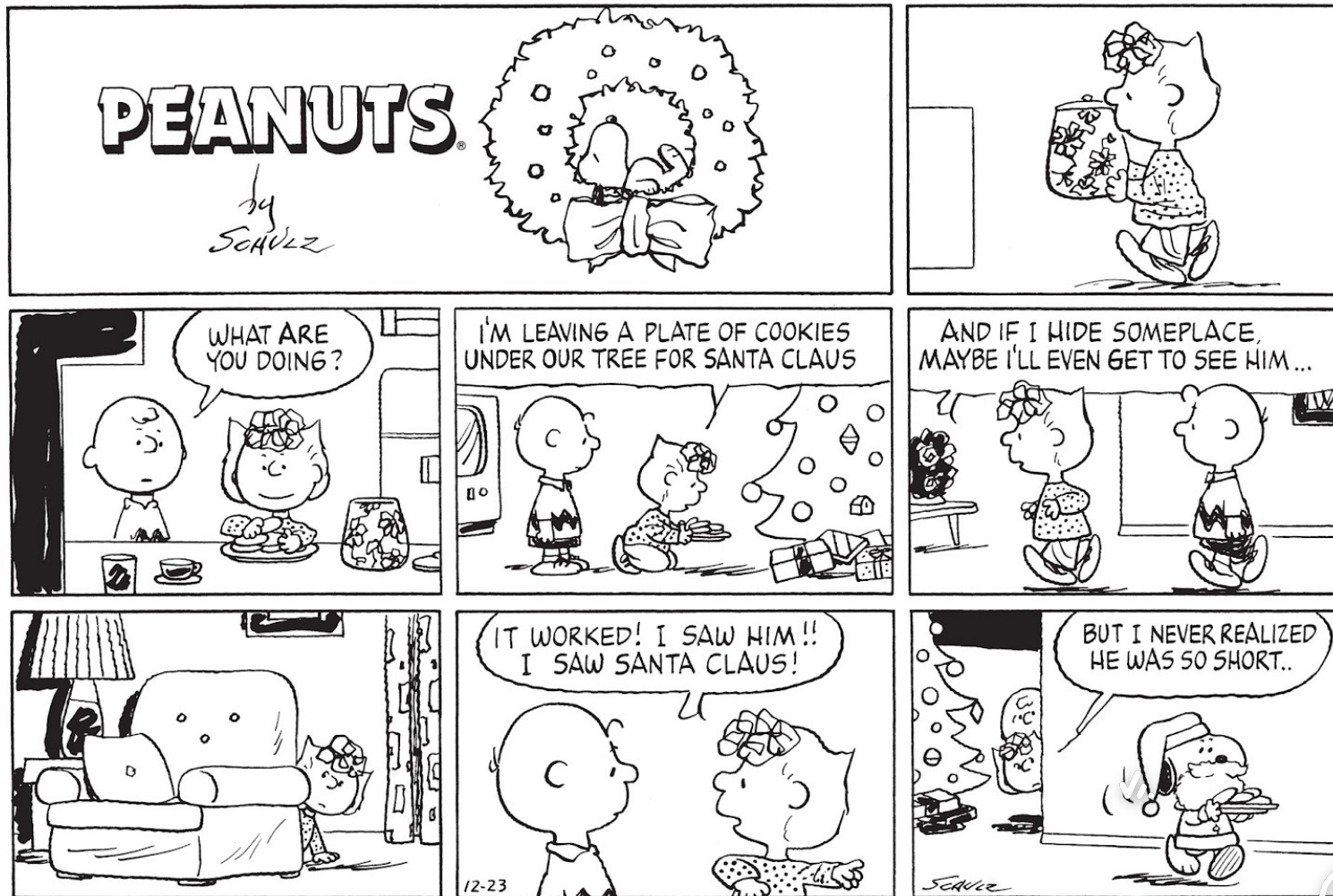




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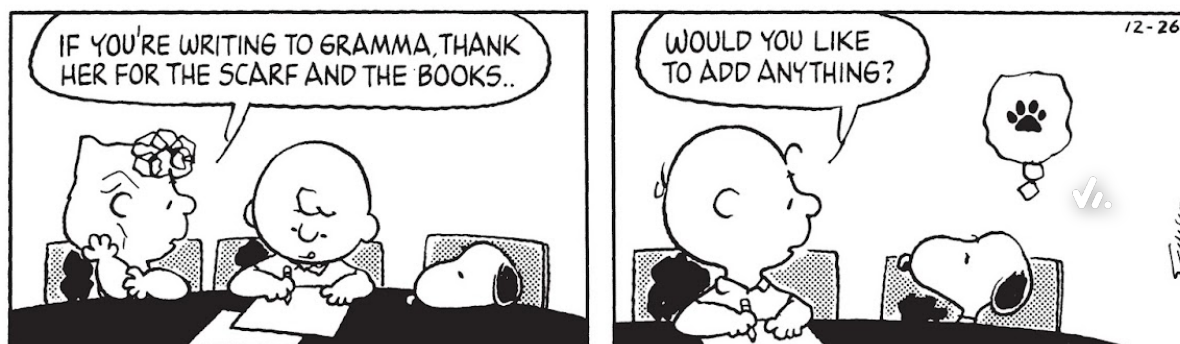
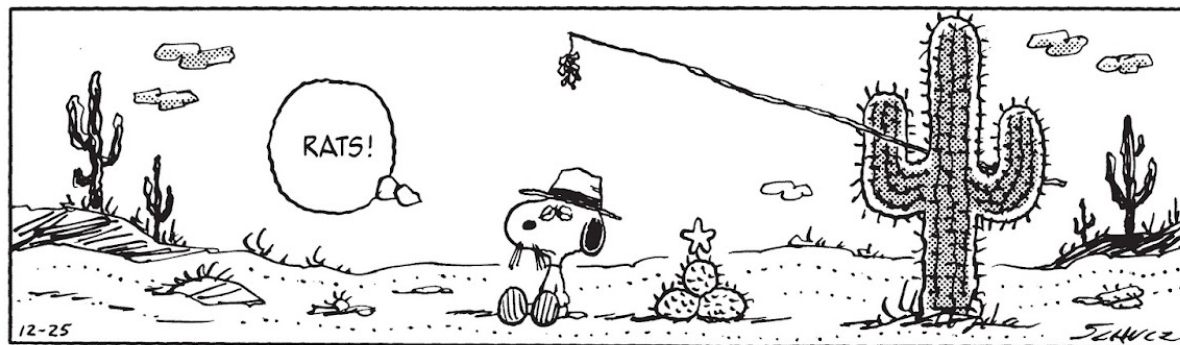
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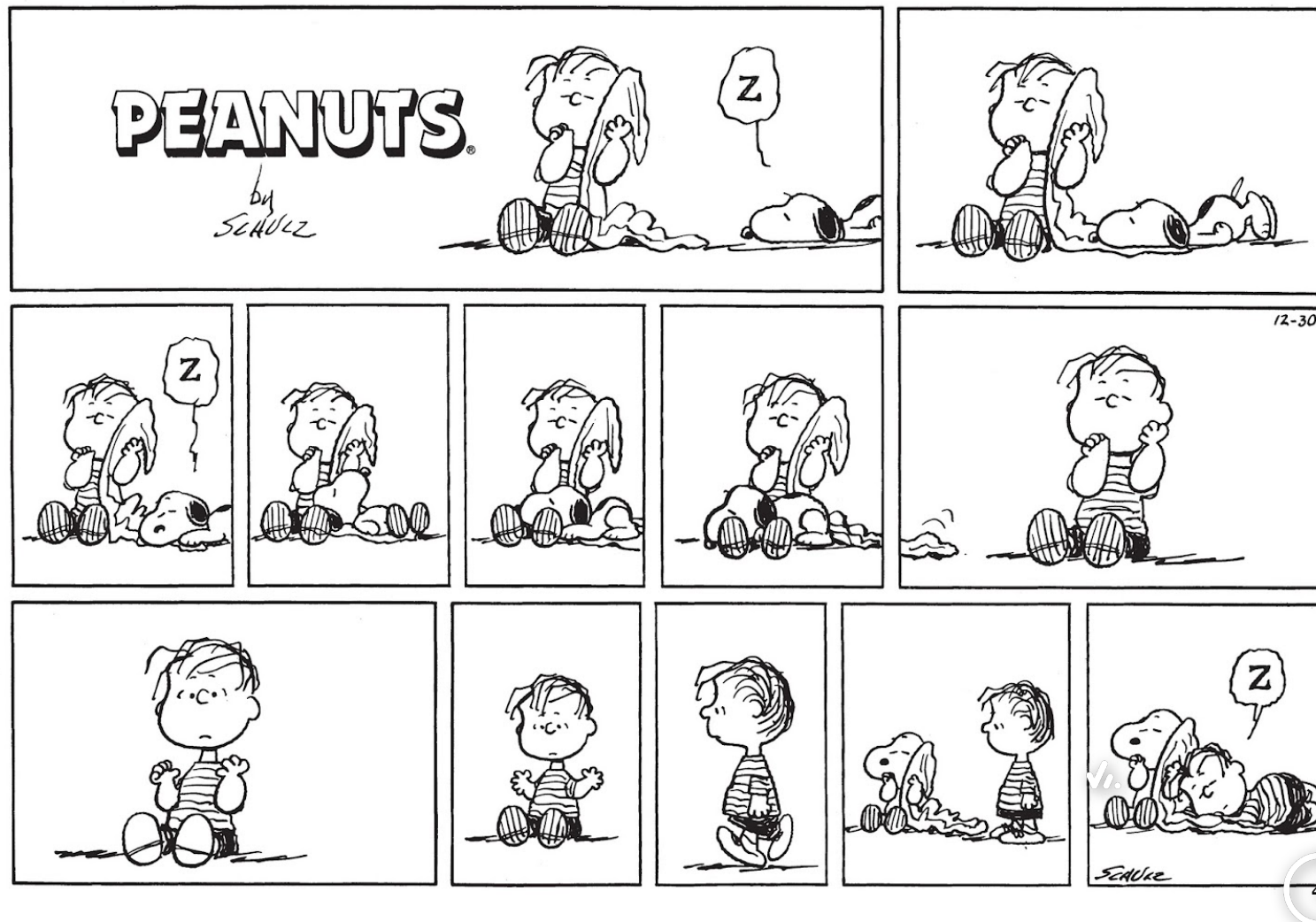


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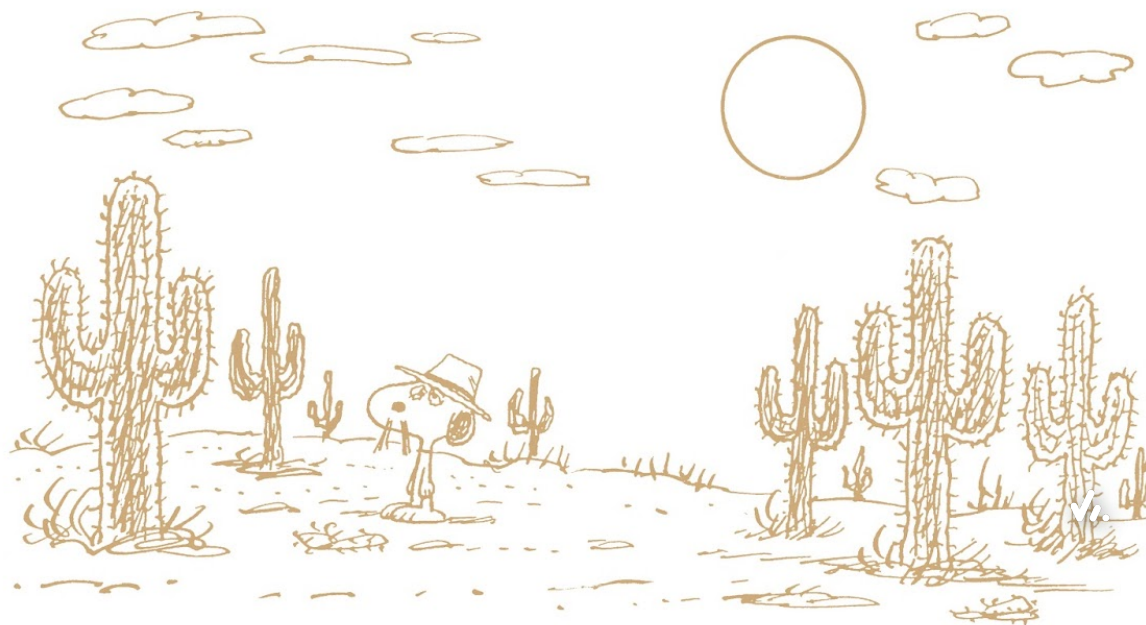
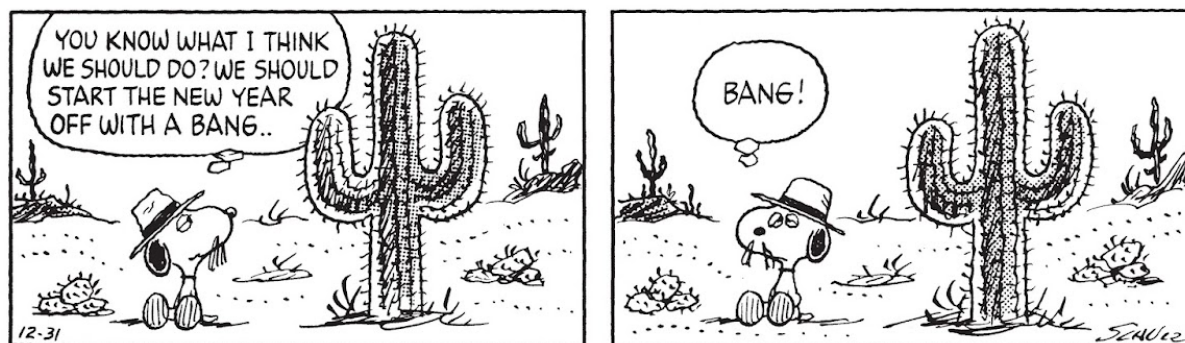


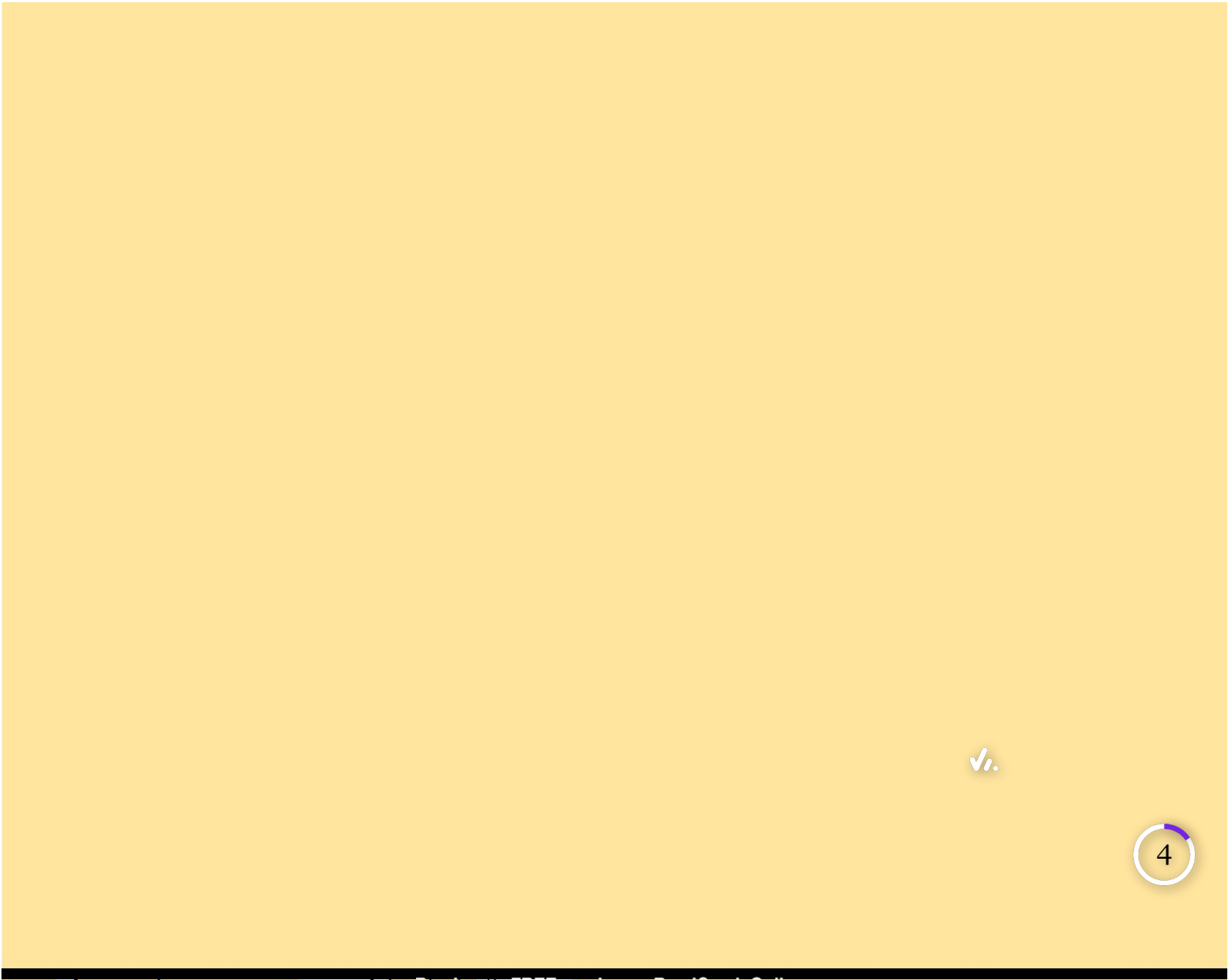




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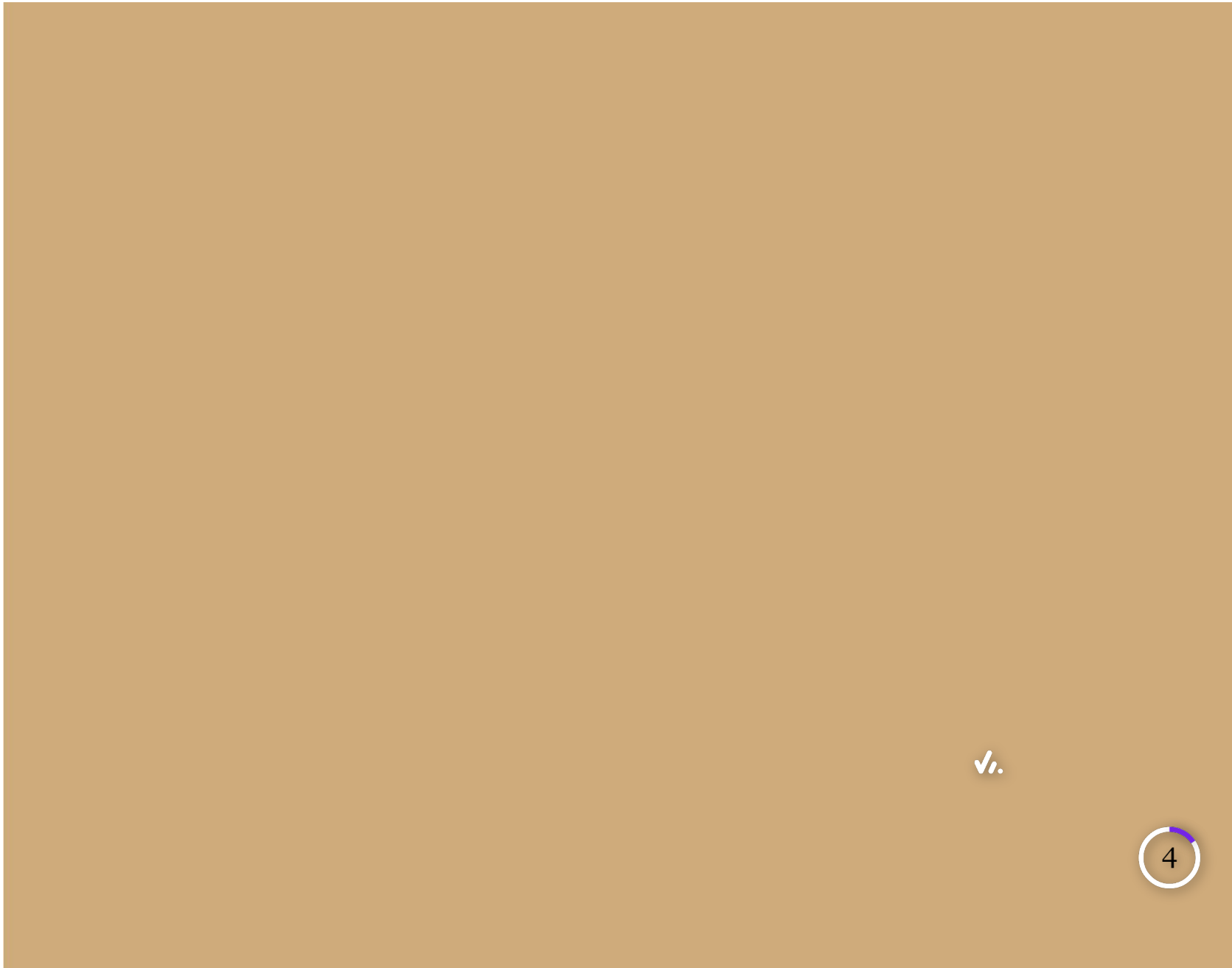
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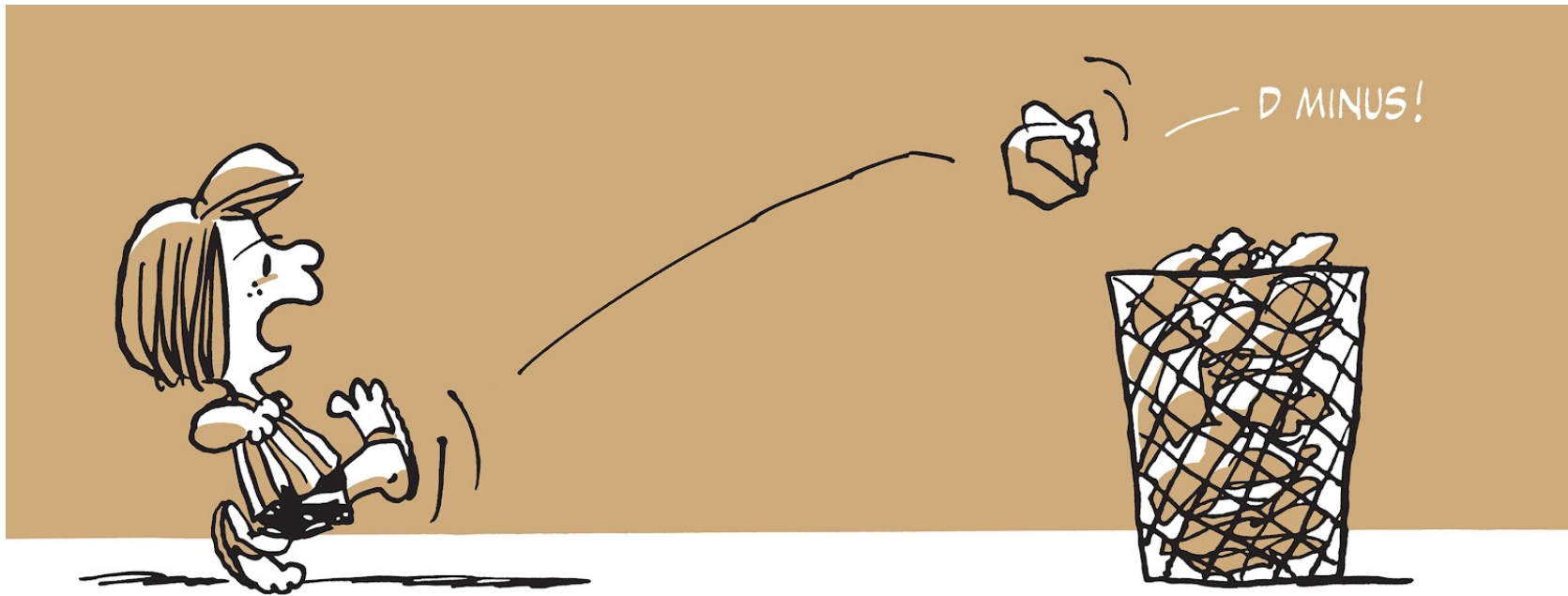
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CHARLES M. SCHULZ • 1922 TO 2000

Charles M. Schulz was born November 26, 1922 in Minneapolis. His destiny was foreshadowed when an uncle gave him, at the age of two days, the nickname Sparky (after the racehorse Spark Plug in the newspaper strip *Barney Google*).

Schulz grew up in St. Paul. By all accounts, he led an unremarkable, albeit sheltered, childhood. He was an only child, close to both parents, his eventual career path nurtured by his father, who bought four Sunday papers every week — just for the comics.

An outstanding student, he skipped two grades early on, but began to flounder in high school — perhaps not so coincidentally at the same time kids are going through their cruelest, most status-conscious

period of socialization. The pain, bitterness, insecurity, and failures chronicled in *Peanuts* appear to have originated from this period of Schulz's life.

Although Schulz enjoyed sports, he also found refuge in solitary activities: reading, drawing, and watching movies. He bought comic books and Big Little Books, pored over the newspaper strips, and copied his favorites — *Buck Rogers*, the Walt Disney characters, *Popeye*, *Tim Tyler's Luck*. He quickly became a connoisseur; his heroes were Milton Caniff, Roy Crane, Hal Foster, and Alex Raymond.

In his senior year in high school, his mother noticed an ad in a local newspaper for a correspondence school, Federal Schools (later called Art

Instruction Schools). Schulz passed the talent test, completed the course and began trying, unsuccessfully, to sell gag cartoons to magazines. (His first published drawing was of his dog, Spike, and appeared in a 1937 *Ripley's Believe It Or Not!* installment.)

After World War II had ended and Schulz was discharged from the army, he started submitting gag cartoons to the various magazines of the time; his first breakthrough, however, came when an editor at *Timeless Topix* hired him to letter adventure comics. Soon after that, he was hired by his alma mater, Art Instruction, to correct student lessons returned by mail.

Between 1948 and 1950, he succeeded in selling 17 cartoons to the *Saturday Evening Post* — as well as, to the local *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, a weekly comic feature called *Li'l Folks*. It was run in the women's section and paid \$10 a week. After writing and drawing the feature for two years, Schulz asked for a better location in the paper or for daily exposure, as well as a raise. When he was turned down on all three counts, he quit.

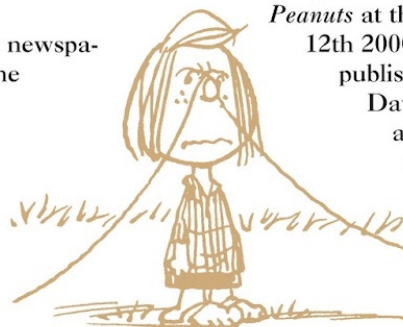
He started submitting strips to the newspaper syndicates. In the Spring of 1950, he received a letter from the United Feature Syndicate, announcing their interest in his submission, *Li'l Folks*. Schulz boarded a train in June for New York City; more interested in doing a strip than a panel, he also brought along the first installments

of what would become *Peanuts* — and that was what sold. (The title, which Schulz loathed to his dying day, was imposed by the syndicate). The first *Peanuts* daily appeared October 2, 1950; the first Sunday, January 6, 1952.

Prior to *Peanuts*, the province of the comics page had been that of gags, social and political observation, domestic comedy, soap opera, and various adventure genres. Although *Peanuts* changed, or evolved, during the 50 years Schulz wrote and drew it, it remained, as it began, an anomaly on the comics page — a comic strip about the interior crises of the cartoonist himself. After a painful divorce in 1973 from which he had not yet recovered, Schulz told a reporter, “Strangely, I’ve drawn better cartoons in the last six months — or as good as I’ve ever drawn. I don’t know how the human mind works.” Surely, it was this kind of humility in the face of profoundly irreducible human question that makes *Peanuts* as universally moving as it is.

Diagnosed with cancer, Schulz retired from *Peanuts* at the end of 1999. He died on February 12th 2000, the day before his last strip was published (and two days before Valentine’s Day) — having completed 17,897 daily and Sunday strips, each and every one fully written, drawn, and lettered entirely by his own hand — an unmatched achievement in comics.

—Gary Groth





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